

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Sherwood R.H. Greenwell, 62, rancher and landowner

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Sherwood R.H. Greenwell, Caucasian, was born March 9, 1919 in Honolulu. He is a third generation member of a Kona landowning and ranching family. Sherwood grew up on his father's ranch in Kealahou. He completed his elementary and high school education on Oahu and the Mainland.

In 1938, Sherwood returned to Kona to assume full time responsibilities on the ranch.

He has been an active community leader, serving in numerous organizations. He is a past member of the Hawaii County Board of Supervisors and currently serves as president of the Kona Historical Society.

Sherwood also finds time to tend his rapidly-expanding orchid nursery. He lists Hawaiiana and ranching as his hobbies.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Sherwood R. H. Greenwell (SG)

January 30, 1981

Captain Cook, Kona, Hawaii

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Sherwood Greenwell. Today is January 30, 1981 and we are at his office at the Kealahou Ranch Center in Captain Cook, Kona, Hawaii.

Mr. Greenwell, let's start by having you tell me where you were born and when you were born.

SG: I was born in Honolulu in March of 1919, the 9th of March. My mother had nurses that were friends of hers in Honolulu and as a result she went to Honolulu to have her babies. The four children in the family were all born in Honolulu. It wasn't a lack of confidence in local doctors, I don't think. (Laughs) Just she being a Honolulu girl, she had doctors and nurses that she had known there.

WN: You come from a long line of Greenwells. Can you tell me something about your [paternal] grandfather, Henry Greenwell, and his experiences?

SG: We refer to him not as Henry, but as Henry Nicholas or Nicholas. Henry gets confusing because there are quite a few Henrys in the family. He was born in England, and being the son that was required to go into the military, he took his military training at Sandhurst, the British equivalent of West Point. After graduation, and after he had gotten his commission, he went to Ireland to help in the distribution of food to the Irish during the 1847 Potato Famine.

After he had fulfilled his obligation to the Army, he sold his commission for what at the time would have been considered \$20,000, and he used this money to start himself on a business of his own. At the time he considered going into the raising of sheep in Australia and went to Sydney and then down to Melbourne. It was sometime in Melbourne [that he was] looking over the possibilities of going into sheep. He found, though, that the wool price was low and it wasn't practical or worthwhile to go into sheep.

During this period, gold had been found in California and everybody was participating in the gold rush. He and two partners provisioned a ship, with goods that they planned to take to San Francisco and sell to the miners. They came through Hawaii on their way to San Francisco and upon arrival in San Francisco, the crew left the ship to go to the gold fields, and the partners were left to unload the ship themselves. During this operation my grandfather hurt his back and came to Hawaii, which I guess had the closest doctor at the time, and stayed. He lost the receipts from the sale of the goods, the other partners took off with it. They were partners that he had not known other than prior to meeting them in Melbourne.

In Honolulu, he then became associated with my [maternal] great-grandfather, (Henry John Hunt Holdsworth), in Honolulu who was an importer of merchandise from England. He [Henry Nicholas Greenwell] came to Kona to open up a store in Kailua, representing Mr. Holdsworth's imports to the islands. He liked Kona so much that he decided that he would settle here and eventually acquired property.

WN: What year was this?

SG: Eighteen fifty, and he acquired a piece of property at Kalukalu upon which he later built his house. And opened, eventually, a store there. He built the store in 1870 but had sold merchandise prior to that time. He also raised oranges and in his acquisition of land, got into the business of selling hides, producing tallow and butter. Oranges were a big part of the early business and according to his diaries, one year he sold something like \$20,000 worth of oranges. (Laughs) Even today that's an awful lot of oranges.

WN: Where did he sell the oranges?

SG: California. They used to grow wheat on Maui that used to be sold in California too, so the islands were really settled earlier than the wild California country. They were all chasing gold and the islands supplied some of the food stuffs to California.

My grandfather's family was an old family in Durham, in fact the old home is called Greenwell Ford which goes back to the 1600's. My grandfather, in his business here in Kona was more interested--I guess because of coming from a small place like England--was interested in acquisition of land. And every time he had an opportunity, he acquired land. He borrowed money for this purpose and when he died in 1891, his estate was so much in debt that none of his children--and he had ten of them--ever bought land unless it was absolutely necessary for their operations because they were so fearful of this indebtedness that was a part of the estate that they inherited. Fortunately there were no estate taxes or anything like that at the time otherwise the whole thing would have been wiped out.

His (total) acquisitions in Kona probably added up to around 36,000 acres. Lands of Kealakekua, Hokukano, Honokohau, and there were

some smaller places. Those were the major areas. The big areas are made up today of what is Kealahou Ranch that was willed to my father, Arthur Leonard Greenwell. The home ranch where Kalukalu is (and the old store which is the headquarters of the Kona Historical Society) and the old family home went to the W. H. Greenwell Ranch which was the oldest son, William Henry Greenwell. The third size ranch went to Frank (Radcliff) Greenwell and that is known as the Palani Ranch, right above Kailua.

The association with my [maternal] great-grandfather, Mr. Holdsworth, went a little further. They were involved in oranges, which the fields today still have some trees that belonged to the Ackerman family. That property was owned by Mr. Holdsworth. Mr. Holdsworth, after his children were born, went back to England to have his children educated. Grandfather Holdsworth came back to the islands and he and his future bride were married in Paris in 1891, I think it was. It was sort of interesting that the two sides of the family who were at one time associated in business, became associated in marriage.

As I mentioned earlier, my grandfather [Greenwell] died in 1891. He had always been suffering from internal problems and he thought it was stomach. He eventually died on the ship between Kailua and Kawaihae of a heart attack. So probably a lot of his problems were of the heart rather than the stomach but he was always taking all sorts of weird concoctions for his health. This is one of the reasons why he settled in Kona. The climate here in Kona seemed to be one that satisfied him very much. Honolulu was too hot, Kona was just right.

WN: You mentioned earlier that he was part of the landed gentry?

SG: Uh huh [Yes].

WN: And he was always trying to acquire land. Is that some characteristic of that class of people in England?

SG: I don't know, I would imagine that they--the landed gentry--are families that have owned land for generations, so land would be very valuable to them. They would recognize the value of land, particularly if you didn't inherit it--you were the second or the third son. (Laughs) You would want to have your own estate, which he acquired here.

One thing that made me feel pretty good, a couple of years ago there was all the hassles of the Hawaiians saying that the land had been taken away from them. One of them who had researched a lot of the land acquisitions of--I hate to use the word haole because it's a connotation of being white and it doesn't, it means foreigner--the lands that were acquired by foreigners, were, by the Hawaiians' attitude, taken away from them, this one Hawaiian that looked over and said, "You know, I've got to congratulate you. Your grandfather acquired no lands, that I could find, by any nefarious ways. They all seemed to be very on the up and up."

WN: Do you know who owned the lands before your father acquired them?

SG: My grandfather bought Kealakekua from John Paris who was....the sale is signed by John D. Paris, Jr. The negotiations were so involved between he and his father that it's really hard to say whether it was acquired from his father or he. I make this distinction because his father was a missionary and the son was not a missionary. I don't know how the other lands---the acquisition of Kalukalu was by auction or something of that kind, he applied for a grant and got, I don't know, 15 or 20 acres. I think I gave you something on my sister Amy's history of (Henry Nicholas Greenwell) and it mentions it in there. But he was always on the lookout for land, and I think it just goes back to where land was important to him because he was part of the segment of the British that had land, but couldn't acquire it themselves because it went to the oldest son. He just realized the importance of it.

WN: Were there others from England like your grandfather that came to Hawaii to acquire land?

SG: Yeah, I would...

WN: Non-missionaries?

SG: Non-missionaries, uh, the Maguires [of] Huehue Ranch, I would say. The Woodses. Most of them eventually married into Hawaiian families, like Parker, Parker married into a Hawaiian family and acquired his [land] that way. On Kauai there were the Robinsons and the Sinclairs. The Rices on Kauai, I think also the same way. I'm not sure where they were from. Colonel Norris that acquired Kahuku Ranch was a sea captain. There must be quite a few others, Campbell [of] Campbell Estates in Honolulu. But he acquired his by marrying into Hawaiian nobility. (Laughs) Maybe in some ways he [Nicholas] was a little unique, I don't really...

WN: Unique in what ways?

SG: Well, in his interest in acquiring land as a person that he was, as being either the same or different from other people in the islands that acquired property. Of course, probably the reason is that I don't know how these other people acquired their property. Robinsons I'm sure, on Kauai would be similar to my grandfather in their acquisition of land.

WN: You said that your grandfather acquired three parcels of land, right? One was the home ranch.

SG: Major properties, yeah.

WN: The other one in Kealakekua.

SG: Yeah.

WN: This went to the second son?

SG: Uh huh, Arthur, right.

WN: And then the third one...

SG: Uncle Frank, Honokohau.

WN: What determined what parcel of land to give to each son?

SG: I think it followed in practice, the same thing that was handed down from one generation to another. The oldest son got the home property which I guess at the time was considered the best. The second son got the second best, Kealakekua, and the third son got the other. Then there were other pieces of land that were given to the other sons and daughters. Some of the daughters were paid off by their brothers. My father was to pay off his sister, Christina, \$10,000 as her legacy. At the time, it might have been considered quite a sizeable amount of money and somewhat similar in value to Kealakekua which my grandfather had bought 10 years before his death for \$12,000. So, \$10,000 was probably quite a sizeable amount of money for my father to pay off his sister with.

WN: What is considered the best land?

SG: I would imagine---I guess the home ranch would be the best. There was more land along the road, besides having a tremendous area down below the road, between the ocean and the road. There were good soil type lands above and it also connected onto the area (that) was leased by him, the land of Keauhou ma uka where the Kanahaha sheep station was where they sheared wool that he had acquired from Dr. Trusseau back in the '70s. So there was a large area that was directly connected with the home ranch that increased the home ranch's capabilities about 200 percent, which neither one of the other places had. Kealakekua doesn't have adjoining land it can use in conjunction with the ranch that gives it that capability of size. And we are limited because we have one side of the ranch that is all 'a'ā lava and of the 10,000 acres we have above, we probably have 3,000 in 'a'ā lava and 7,000 that's in varieties of pāhoehoe covered with little bit of soil and some areas of soil. We probably could plow, maybe out of the 7,000 acres, (10) acres. (Laughs)

WN: Plow for agriculture?

SG: Yeah. Now that's all soil and gravel, most of it, so very shallow soil with gravel underneath. So there is nothing you can plow, maybe 10 acres, maybe 15.

WN: Is that the main reason why most of the land is in ranching?

SG: Yes, of course the lower lands in this area are used for orchard crops. We used to have, at one point, about 450 acres that was in coffee, and of that about 400 acres were leased to the Captain Cook

Coffee Company. And the balance was leased to independent farmers who milled their own coffee, producing their own parchment. The others became sub-tenants of ours, tenants of Captain Cook Coffee Company because of earlier associations with [W.W.] Brunner's coffee plantation and Robert Wallace's coffee plantation. These were eventually taken over by Captain Cook Coffee Company. Captain Cook assumed these leases. These leases go back to 1900. We still have the Brunner lease around here that is dated 1906 or something like that.

WN: Talking about those plantations, what was the average size of the coffee plantations before 1900?

SG: I don't know, the land that we leased to Robert Wallace and to Brunner--one was 88 acres and the other was around 60 or 70 acres, I don't know how they operated. They probably hired people to do the picking and that. And probably then established these people on the farms and they were then separated into separate units. But our association with coffee at that time was a lease to an individual who had 80 or 90 acres and he then subdivided it out. We didn't have the small leases at that time that we eventually ended up with.

WN: The small leases by say, Japanese farmers, six acres or so, they were actually subleasees?

SG: They were subleasees of our tenants. We leased the land to Captain Cook for \$10--our last lease--that expired around 7/57 [July 1957]. We leased it to them for \$10 an acre, and they leased it to their tenants for \$20. One thing with us was we didn't have to be involved in collecting rent from a number of different people. We just collected rent from one source. Probably at times, like the depression, it was a more guaranteed income to us than having to depend on the finances of the individual farmer, which got very bad. It was horrible during the depression and after that. The legislature, somewhere around 1933, created the school coffee schedule. And along with the coffee schedule, the territory would excuse the amount of taxes paid by a tenant if the landlord excused the same amount of money. So, we had a lot of tenants that paid no taxes and paid very little rent. So some of the rents per year, down on the lower side of the road--I don't know why but I think of Sato's rental--they paid \$60 a year for 6 acres. But they paid no taxes because we had taken off the taxes. We had eliminated the amount of rent, that eliminated their taxes. I hope that eventually something like that happens, that the landlord is also considered. (Laughs) Rentals to some people are their only income. There were a lot of people who didn't do this, they couldn't afford to relieve their tenants of rental because that was their only income. I think we did it because we could afford it because we had another source of income from the cattle. I don't think that something like that will ever go through again. It sort of put the person on the spot too. I think that some people, like some people in the Kainaliu area that had no other income other than the coffee rental income, they couldn't afford to do this. So in a way they were looked upon

as being kind of stinkers, while some of the others of us that could afford it had eliminated the taxes, the rent.

Coffee though, at that time, since there weren't very many other opportunities, was hung on to desperately by the farmers, you see. Of course the farmers were a lot younger then than they were when coffee prices went down later in the 1950s, twenty years later, when their children had grown and were living somewhere else. A lot of them left [Kona]. And it was in the late 1950s when we then offered lands to them to purchase. And those lands that were purchased....it showed the difference between what people thought of land that they owned, and those people who were living on leased land. The farmers who had purchased their land took care of their land beautifully. The others let their land slip or they moved to Honolulu to be with their families. Very few of the families stayed here on leased land. The land that was purchased held those families here, though. This was the time, as I said the other day, one of the most important things that I did was not to renew the lease and to offer the lands to the farmers.

WN: Not to renew Captain Cook's lease?

SG: Yeah.

WN: Okay, we'll get into that a little later when we get into a little more detail on the problems of the farmers.

SG: Oh, okay.

WN: Right now I'd like to get into your youth and growing up in Kona [and], what it was like. What kind of house did you people live in?

SG: Well, we lived in a rather large house, large house even in standards of those days and today. It cost \$4,000 to build. (Laughs) It was a double-walled house and it had wallpaper on it. It was made by Mr. Lewis and the plans were done in Honolulu and the contractor was a Honolulu contractor. The second story was put up by Mr. Lewis who was the brother of the man who was the manager of Hackfeld, later American Factors, in Napoopoo. Because I came later than the carriages and things, we had an open touring car and a garage. Everybody had garages in those days. They have today, but for some reason, to me a garage in those days was fascinating. It had all kinds of little oil cans in them and things, little bits of automobiles that had special service. Right near that was our engine house, we called it. And there was an old Delco one-cylinder engine in there that generated electricity to charge the batteries; and we used lights off of these batteries at night in the house. It was a 32-volt system and the batteries eventually made wonderful flower vases to put on graves at the cemetery. (Chuckles) That was run every morning.

Fujimoto was our yardman. He was not only that, he also milked the cows behind the house, we had a certain number of cows that were

milked, probably seven or eight. Half of the milk from the cows was distributed amongst Fujimoto, ourselves, and Tadao Masatomi used to come down from the Wallace's and get milk to take up. Masatomi's father followed Mr. [Kinzo] Manago as the cook up at the Wallace's. Milk was kept in pans in the house and cream was skimmed off of the milk.

Our stoves were wood stoves at that time and ice was delivered from American Factors in Kailua once or twice a week. And, probably on Saturdays, because we seemed to have a lot more ice on Sunday when Nakashima, who was our cook at the time, always made ice cream. Nakashima and I got along very well together and he would always let me lick the paddle in the ice cream freezer. Later in the afternoon, when he was chopping firewood, Sunday afternoon, would roll Bull Durham for me. (Laughs) I was only about four years old. (Laughs) He and I got along very well together. My brother [once] spilled a pan of milk in the house and my mother said milk ran all over the floor. He came flying into the living room asking where my brother was because he had spilled the milk and my mother said it wasn't my brother, but it was I. He said "okay" and he went back and wiped it all up. (Laughs) He was a very nice guy. Fujimoto, I had given him a cigar when I was three and the story was that I gave him one so he would light one and give it to me. I came into the house absolutely white as a sheet. (Laughs)

Early days on the ranch, before we were able to ride horses alone, I used to ride behind my father. Sit behind him hanging onto his waist. Times then were not coming up ma uka on the ranch but going into the lower pastures below the house. And we would go down, he always had a vegetable garden down there somewhere where he grew sweet potatoes and corn, and I'd go down with him just to keep him company.

WN: Did you do any kind of work on the ranch when you were a kid?

SG: I did later, I'm right now up to four years old. (Laughs) Then I started riding on my own horse; we were led around. I'll never forget, this was in the vegetable garden down below, and my horse's rope that my father was leading the horse by got under his horse's tail and he and the horse went bucking off. I was left on my horse until the rope got (out from) under the tail and then he came back and picked me up.

In 1927 my uncle Henry died and the first time I remember going up on the mountain, way up, was in 1926. And we went up to Papaloa which is where our mountain place is up to the elevation of 5,100 feet and we had lunch up there and the yard was about three feet deep in mint and it smelled so good. You walked through the stuff and the mint smell was so wonderful. No one had lived up there for many years, but my parents figured they would build a house up there for us to go and stay in during the summer. Because the old house was quite small and on that trip, my parents put stones out on the ground to outline this new house that was built in 1927, but we didn't go to because my uncle's death held things up for that year. In 1928 we went up for the first (summer).

Before that I used to ride up with the boys during the cattle driving and stuff. But up until I guess we were about 10 years old, most of our stuff was just horsing around. I mean there wasn't work. When we went up in 1928--in 1928 I was 11 years old--we went into the forest, to clear the forest. We all had hatchets and cane knives and cut the fern and any driving cattle, we would all go....I was probably the most interested, cattewise. My older brother wasn't that interested in cattle and he'd drive cattle with us and do things like that but eventually he got off into other things. In 1934 he put a telephone line up on an engineered system with Yoshi Takashiba [another interviewee]. He had hired Takashiba and put this line up himself. My father had very little use for the idea of a telephone system which eventually he thought was grand, but he couldn't see it before then. My brother, when we got up to Papaloa in 1928, was making radio sets to pick up news from Honolulu. He eventually went to MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] for a year, after graduating from Punahou. And he would have loved today in his electronics because that was what his forte was. And my father couldn't understand how a light was turned on by a switch. (Laughs) They had a very difficult time understanding each other.

But I was the one that was the cowboy and so nearly all my summers after that were spent being with the cowboys, driving cattle, cutting fern, planting grass and all this other stuff. When I was back on summer vacations here in Kona.

WN: How many hired hands were there on the ranch?

SG: At that time, 1928, there were two men at Papaloa, there were two cowboys and two weed men at Pauahi. That would be six, and down here, one, two....I would say eight. Then there was Fujimoto who was the yard, yeah. We also had at times extra people who did weed work. Some people permanently, like Mr. and Mrs. Hashimoto, Shimonaka, later there were Filipino gangs that would come in off coffee season. And then later than that we got, oh, like Tsukahara, who I think you probably met.

WN: Tiger?

SG: Tiger! Torahichi Tsukahara [another interviewee], Tamon Koshi, Akira Fukuda, Aoki, and they came and worked off season. Tsukahara used to say coffee was good because you'd work real hard (for part of the year) and then you had two or three months "fish hana hana," fishing. He didn't fish, he came and worked for us. He eventually became a full-time employee when his sons were old enough to start taking care of their farm. But some of those men were very good in stone wall building and that. We don't have any people today that are that capable (at) that type of work anymore. Aoki was exceptionally good. He was a fantastic stone mason. And these are all the old professions--not professions--trades that are pretty well gone today.

But, the work then was different in that the ranch was quite different. Lots of it was still in thick forests, very little

grass, mostly fern under the trees, and our first years at Papaloa were spent cutting the fern out from under the trees, cutting some of the trees down and then as the ground opened up, seeding it with grasses. Nineteen thirty-five or thirty-six Kikuyu grass was introduced and that was eventually planted everywhere and has taken over the whole ranch. The earlier open clearing of the ranch, in the 1880s, 1890s was almost done entirely by the cows eating their way into the forests, gathering some food and they sort of fanned out from the dairies where they came back each day with their calves that were kept in a separate pen in the dairy. So the cows would come back to the calves and then the calves would get half the milk, and the dairy would get the other half. The cows were milked out in open pens which I'm sure today the Board of Health would frown upon. (Laughs) But the later clearing was done by weed men that were in different places. Pauahi, as I said earlier, two cowboys and there were two weed men. And those weed men's job was just to go out and cut fern and plant grass.

WN: You're talking about the Pahala...

SG: Papaloa.

WN: Papaloa.

SG: Papaloa, god you're getting me confused. (Laughs) It's Papaloa, P-A-P-A-L-O-A. The one on the other side of the island is Papaaloa, P-A-P-A-A-L-O-A, yeah. This [Papaloa] means "opening in the forest."

WN: This is part of Kealakekua Ranch?

SG: [SG examines map of Kealakekua Ranch on wall.] Yes, yeah, this is a map and....God, I've never had an opportunity to use this really before. We're right here, now, this is the top of the coffee [lands], right here. This is Pawaina, which is one of the early dairies and called Hashimoto's at one time and Shimonaka's at another because it was (named after) the people who lived there...

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

SG: This is Pauahi, also known as Sato's because Sato lived there for many years. And this is probably the last dairy that kept going. And this is where there were two weed men and two cowboys staying. And this is Papaloa.

WN: Way up there?

SG: Yeah, this is up at 5,100 feet, and this is 4,300 feet, this is 3,500 and the first dairy was right here, San Antone.

WN: Back in 1928, did you people still have the dairies?

SG: No, the use of the dairies ended, I think around 1898, 1899, 1900 somewhere right around that era. I was told by someone a few years ago, they used to look forward to Greenwell butter down at the Metropolitan Market in Honolulu. So it must have been around that time.

WN: Do you happen to know why they gave up the dairies?

SG: Probably health rules. (Laughs) I don't know, I think it was impractical. You know, a lot of dairies ended up where they had easier access to highways and that sort thing. We have no wagon roads or anything on Kealakekua, the only roadways were eventually made by a fellow called Motooka who had a koa mill up there and he had sled roads. While over on the W. H. Greenwell Ranch, there is a wagon road that goes right up from the beach through Kainaliu up to Kanahaha, the sheep station. And wool was brought down on wagons from up there. And there were other places--the Paris relatives had places, the Johnsons--that were served by that wagon road. We have nothing on this side [Kealakekua]. The land on that side isn't as steep as it is here. So all the butter had to be brought down on mules and that was not the easiest way of doing it.

The other thing, probably, that influenced the demise of the dairies was the fact that there became better transportation to Honolulu and the ranches changed from dairy-type ranches to beef-type ranches and cattle was shipped to Honolulu. They were being shipped in the early 1890s, the beginning of it. My aunt's diary speaks of their taking 13 head of cattle down to Kaawaloa to put on the boat for Honolulu. Eventually, in 1930s, the Humuula that was taking cattle around that time would take 130 head. So it showed the difference in the size of the ships between these periods, and Honolulu could consume all this meat. In the old days, Honolulu could consume more, but they didn't take enough to make it worthwhile to convert completely from dairies to beef. But, around 1900 this happened, and in 1906 Hawaii Meat Company started that serviced the outside island ranches. As a result of more cattle having to go down there and the ranchers feeling that they would be better off doing the slaughtering cooperatively rather than having it done by somebody else.

WN: Who started the Hawaii Meat Company?

SG: A. W. Carter, Alfred W. Carter. He was the trustee for the estate of Thelma Parker who was the heir of John Parker that owned Parker Ranch. Grandmother of Richard Smart.

WN: So when Hawaii Meat Company was formed, was that a shot in the arm for the outer island ranches?

SG: I think not a shot in the arm so much as a security that they had a place assured them of slaughter and sales. They were, before that, completely at the mercy of Yee Hop slaughtering operations. I think there was also a sort of a feeling that some of the weights and things were not correct, (laughs) the slaughtering of the

carcass weights and things. And they thought it would be just better all the way around that the ranches had their own operation.

WN: Would the outer island beef be more expensive because of the shipping costs?

SG: No. No product is more expensive--particularly food items--because of distance. Food items (are) always priced (as a result of) supply and demand at the consuming point. Island beef's price in Honolulu is established by Mainland beef's landed price in Honolulu, because we supply the minor portion of the amount of meat that is consumed in the islands. We supply probably only about 45 percent of all the meat that is consumed here and the rest of it comes either from the Mainland or Australia and New Zealand. Would you like a cup of coffee?

WN: Want to take a break?

SG: I don't care, I'll have a glass of water.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: You were saying that you spent a lot of time, you liked to horse around and have a good time, what kind of things did you do?

SG: Well, when we were very young, it seems as though a lot of our time was spent indoors in the afternoons. Kona seemed to rain constantly every afternoon. So in the mornings we would be out in the yard playing around swings and things, and in the afternoon it would seem that we were always indoors because it poured, and we either played or drew things. Then when the days were good outside, one of the things I recall, on Sunday afternoons when any car (went by) was an excitement. You would hear a car coming down the road and you would run down and see it pass and wave at the people. There were so few cars, probably Kona had 30 or 40 cars at the time. And one of the excitements was to hear the old Model-T go down the road with the drum beating in it that identified the car as the advertising vehicle for the movies up at Goto's Kealakekua Theatre. And they would throw out flyers when they saw people coming out to meet the car that would advertise the show.

So our excitement, today wouldn't be very exciting to most people, but I think the days to all of us were an awful lot more interesting than days are to kids of today. Everything was a new experience. I'll never forget in Honolulu, when we first got our radio, I think it must have been around 1926, I was turning the dial and I got a Japanese program and I ran into the kitchen and I told Ritsu, our cook there, that there was a Japanese program on the radio. I'll never forget it. She was of the old Japanese (that) used to have a rat in their hair and their hair was all bundled up like this, you know, with a bun behind here and she wore a nice kimono and everything, and I'll never forget as she shook her head and said "This no can talk Japan." (Laughs) And you know we as kids used to think the radio had someone in there talking to us. (Laughs) Or

even the phonograph. I mean it was exciting to find out these things. Today everybody takes all of this stuff for granted.

Everything was a new experience and excitement. Coming in to Kona on the Humuula, the old Hawaii, we used to arrive at Kailua about 4:00 or 4:30 in the morning and the noise of the ship and letting down the whale boats on the side and the excitement of coming back to Kona at Christmas or summer time. And you would look up the hill in the early dawn and the only lights you would see would be the lights of the cars coming down. There was no electricity other than (those) people (who had) their own generating plants at home, and there really weren't that many people who had generating plants. And you never turned a light on unless you really needed it. But, there would always be people down meeting the boat. Some of them, I don't think came to meet anybody in particular but just came for the sort of excitement of what was happening.

And the mail used to be quite an excitement. The old post office used to be--when I was a kid--in the old People's Bank of Hilo building which is where the Bank of Hawaii is today. And the new Bank of Hawaii building, which was new at that time, was nearer the corner. And across the street from the post office was a little store--which eventually became a tax office--which was then a soda fountain sort of thing. And it was opened on steamer days and it was built by Take Uemoto's grandmother-in-law, Pearl. His wife's grandmother and grandfather; the Abe's, who had a store across the road there. And they had a big ice cream freezer down in the basement where they made ice cream and they sold this on steamer days. And everybody would come to the post office to get their mail. Mail was quite an experience.

WN: How often did the steamer come?

SG: Twice a week. Everything was an experience. Today, everything is commonplace. The mail comes in all the time. They only grouse because something doesn't show up on time. I know in my grandfather's diary he mentions at one point, somewhere around 1880--I guess it was the beginning of the steamships. If you got a letter to Kealakekua in 24 hours from Honolulu, that's pretty good. (Laughs) You know that beats some of the mail today. (Laughs) If you mail a letter here in Captain Cook today and it is addressed to Waimea....in the old days there used to be the mail trucks that used to go to Waimea, they go both ways around the island. Today, if you address a letter to Waimea, it's mailed to Honolulu and cancelled down there and it's then sent up to Waimea.

WN: Is that right?

SG: Yeah. Or to Hilo it's the same thing. If it's in Kona, if you put it in the Kona slot, it then is cancelled and goes directly to Kona Post Office. But if you happen to put it in the wrong slot, it goes to Honolulu and then cancelled down there and shipped out again.

Mail days were exciting, and as I say everybody looked forward to them and the sale of ice cream was an addition to the fun of going to the post office to wait for the mail.

WN: Where was the post office?

SG: Right where the new Bank of Hawaii is today.

WN: Oh, I see.

SG: But it used to be, prior to that, People's Bank of Hilo building. I think in one of the pictures that you had that shows the Hongwanji Temple behind? One of the pictures you had the other day, it shows the People's Bank and there is a car parked in front of it and off to the right, behind, is the Hongwanji Temple.

WN: Oh, in that area. Did that serve the whole district?

SG: Yes, and we used to get mail delivered to us. We used to have a big mailbox out in front of the house. Eventually it was found that it would be practical or be convenient for the people up here to have another post office and so a post office was (opened) in the Captain Cook Coffee Company building. And the postmaster was the bookkeeper of Captain Cook Coffee Company. And the name became Captain Cook [post office] because it was in Captain Cook Coffee Company's building and was run by Captain Cook Coffee Company. It could have been called Kaawaloa [post office] if they wanted to name it the name of the land. Now, that picture up there [SG examines old photograph on wall], that is the old Kealakekua Post Office in 1906. Down on the road to Napoopoo, at a place that my grandfather used to call Kealakekua House or King's Garden--my father called it Kealakekua House--there's an old house there behind that little building that is probably over 100 years old. That building no longer exists. But that's the old Kealakekua Post Office and it was on Kealakekua and then later it moved off to the (north). People used to think somehow it was sort of a contract or something. As a result I don't think the contracts were very good and most of the people who got into the post offices lost their franchise because of taking stamp money home. (Laughs)

WN: In talking to Billy Paris [another interviewee] yesterday, he was telling me that the districts have changed. The names of things moved, in other words this [land] is considered today [to be] Captain Cook.

SG: That's right.

WN: But before it was Kealakekua.

SG: Kealakekua, well, because the post office moved from here which was on this land. To be technical, we're on Waipunaula Kiloa. The boundary just on the other side of this post office is Kealakekua. But that was on the land of Kealakekua, that's how it got its name. The post office, though, moved because of these contracts or whoever

would take up the thing or maybe it was political, whoever got the post office job. And so the post office moved further to the other side. In fact, I recall the post office over there being one, two, three, four, five different places between Kamigaki Store and where it is today. And places acquire their names from the names of their post offices. Up in Waimea, it's called "Kamuela" because the post office is called "Kamuela" (even though) the place is called "Waimea." But (the post office) couldn't be called "Waimea" when they put a post office in because there was already a Waimea post office on Kauai. So, the post office was named "Kamuela" after the first postmaster, Sam Spencer, who later became the Chairman of the [Hawaii County] Board of Supervisors. But it was called "Kamuela" after the postmaster. There is some question there though. One is, some people say, "No it's not named after Sam Spencer the postmaster, it's named after Sam Parker." (Laughs) But no matter what, it is named after a person and that is how it got to be "Kamuela."

WN: What does "Kamuela" mean?

SG: Samuel.

WN: Oh, oh, I see.

SG: You're talking about post office names and unfortunately, then the place becomes known by the post office. My sister particularly was very upset that we were being identified more and more as being "Captain Cook" rather than "Kealahou." I've outgrown that now, it doesn't bother me. (Laughs) It upset her terribly, "This is Kealahou and the post office should be Kealahou."

WN: Where Captain Cook Coffee mill was, was that Napoopoo or Kaawaloa?

SG: Kaawaloa. Not the coffee mill, their headquarters and their store. There was a mill just behind there, in the beginning, and that was the Hind mill and I don't know whether or not that was Captain Cook Coffee Company or was known as Hind Mill. And when the Brunners, Wallaces, Hinds came together, then it was called Captain Cook, I don't know.

But the Goto Theatre was the only theatre up in this area that I know of. The theatre across the road here that Marumoto put in in 1929 came a good deal later than this other. Let me get back just to the Goto's and just say a word about the Goto's.

WN: Yeah, sure.

SG: Because I think the family is sort of interesting as to what they have gotten into. Unaji is with the Honolulu Medical Group, the person that I go to today. When I first came back [to Kona] in 1938, he had just graduated from Konawaena. His father wanted him to stay back and take care of the coffee farm which he was not too excited about doing.

WN: This is Kenji?

SG: Kenji's youngest brother. I don't know how many there were in the family but there was a daughter that was younger and the poor gal died. She became a nurse and died of cancer in her twenties. Unoji spent a year taking care of the coffee farm and everything and things got worse so it looked as though there was no sense in taking care of the coffee, and he then took up medicine. But his father had one of the earliest stores here and he had the theatre. He also took a certain amount of coffee--as we were talking about the other day, some of these stores taking coffee in lieu of cash payments from the farmers that they supplied. And he was then the only independent store in this area. All---most of the people in this area were obligated to Captain Cook Coffee Company and so they did all their shopping down there. But I think he is a good example of what happened to some of the people here and what happened to their kids. Kenji becoming the administrator of Kuakini [Hospital], another son becoming a doctor. Baron Goto lived here with his uncle while he went to Konawaena School and has become a professor of quite some fame all over the world in his agriculture. Kona has produced a whole lot of different people. Marumoto, the person who built the theatre across here in 1929, his son is State Supreme Court Justice, Masaji Marumoto.

WN: He [Masaji Marumoto] went to McKinley [High School in Honolulu] though, right?

SG: He may have, but he's a product of Kona. His father's greatest wish was to go to Washington D.C. And I'm not sure if he was an American citizen or not; if he wasn't, he wanted to be. But he wanted to go to Washington D.C. And unfortunately he did get there, and he fell or tripped or something and got run over by a bus in Washington. It is rather sad, but he was quite an entrepreneur in a way. He used to give credit to a lot of the older Japanese and took their coffee and more or less supported them and took care of them. I think he probably went broke in a lot of instances. I think I told you before, my father used to say he picked up all the old men. (Laughs) My father was very sympathetic of Marumoto because he thought he was taking care of people rather than taking care of himself.

The area of Manago's [hotel] and that were all independents. They had nothing to do with Captain Cook [Coffee Company], they were all direct tenants of ours. And of course I think most of them were more aggressive because they weren't as tied down as the other Captain Cook tenants were. That kind of obligation--what is it, financial domination--I think in a lot of instances hurt a lot of opportunities here in Kona. Because you will see that most of the people who were independent were the ones that seemed to have gotten a lot further ahead.

WN: You mean those who were not on Captain Cook's land?

SG: Yeah, or American Factors'. Mostly Captain Cook, but American Factors had a lot of similar type situations, too. And then there were some others, smaller groups where someone would have a lease of 40 acres or so and lease them out. Frank Henriques, below here, the same sort of thing. He kept an iron thumb down on his tenants. (Laughs) But unfortunately during the tough times, all these people just couldn't go anywhere. They were completely entrapped. I think probably in this area, we changed that.

Oh, one of the things that happened earlier, my brother Gilroy, who was the one who put the telephone line up ma uka, as I said he went to MIT for one year. He had a brain tumor and he couldn't continue, he had to have surgery, and he then came back to the islands and went to the University for a couple of years. He opened a bookstore, University Book Store, and did printing and stuff and then came to Kona and opened a little store. The building is still there on the other side of Joe's building and it was a co-op, and Unoji brings this up to me once in a while and says he had the guts to do this. (Chuckles) My father's best friend was Mr. MacFarlane, who was the manager of Captain Cook Coffee Company, and another friend was [Linzy] Child [former manager of American Factors]. Neither of them being very receptive to co-ops. (Laughs) Gil used to get all his stuff wholesale from American Factors but he used to collect bananas and coffee and other stuff and ship bananas to Honolulu to (Rancho Produce). And he would take coffee and he was paying [to farmers] better prices than American Factors or Captain Cook. Of course, they were getting their food a lot cheaper, so these two very good friends of my father were, I don't think, very happy with Gil's introduction of the co-op to Kona. This was about 1936, long time before any other co-op ever started. But he didn't process anything, it was just a co-op that bought and sold parchment and got food in at wholesale and sold it. I don't think he made any money out of it, he was horrible at business, but he put a bug in the ear of people in Kona that some things were possible. Well, he died in 1937 and probably would have gotten further if he had lived.

WN: When you're talking about domination over tenants, or having tenants....How did that work, for example say with Captain Cook?

SG: How did it---you mean the relationship between the tenant and Captain Cook?

WN: Yeah, how did that work?

SG: Of course my knowledge of the tenant with Captain Cook is heresay. Captain Cook tenants tell me how bad things were between them and Captain Cook and the hard time one guy got when he bought his Chevrolet car and they made it disagreeable enough to where he went and changed it for a Ford, which Captain Cook sold, and where Captain Cook, I think, probably made it tough for some of them. As I say, it's heresay. When we didn't renew their lease [in 1957], we did it on the basis of it being a kind of archaic type of an

operation anyway, to have people tied to the "16 tons I sold (my soul to) the company store" kind of thing. And also, some of the arguments that some of the tenants had were [that] their credit was completely controlled, so they had no opportunity of doing anything other than doing something through Captain Cook, and they wanted a freer opportunity to be able to go buy and sell wherever they wanted to. I am sure this was the case, but I don't think some of the cases were as bad as some of them probably made it out to be. I guess there must have been times though--from what I gather from Captain Cook--that Captain Cook offered them credit through some years when the price of coffee was such that no one was getting any money out of it. At least the families were getting fed, they were getting credit for food. And this of course, over the years, developed probably some rather horrendous debts for some of these families. But at least they were getting credit, or I should say getting food, but the stuff was just debitless, piling up all the time. So there is some [argument] on both sides because when times are good, something like that stinks, when times are bad, it's not that because it is helping them to some extent.

WN: The farmers were forced to sell their coffee to Captain Cook if they were resting on Captain Cook's land?

SG: Yeah, only cherry. None of them processed their coffee themselves. The only people who processed coffee were independents and they had their own coffee drying sheds and pulpers and that and were able to get a little more money for their coffee. Of course, the others were all paying [for] labor down at the coffee mill, while these others were able to make a little more net because it was just an extension of their day by pulping their coffee and the next morning putting it out to dry. So that wasn't costing them anything much more other than their original investment.

WN: Were there farmers who had their own pulping equipment who were on Captain Cook land?

SG: Uh, not that I know of, I don't recall any places up here. I'm trying to think of some that eventually turned over to Captain Cook but I don't recall any, I don't recall there being any.

WN: Was this because they didn't have the amount of land, or they didn't have the money to buy any of this equipment?

SG: They all started this way; Wallace, Brunner and Hind all had their mills for their larger areas and it goes back to where one person on a big place hired people to come and take care of the coffee. Then eventually the place was cut up into smaller units and sublet out to the individual farmers. So the practice of the area was already determined in the very beginning where Brunner had his own mill to take care of his own area, Wallace had his own to take care of his own area. So when all of these consolidated together to form Captain Cook Coffee Company, the method in which the thing ran was already established. Of course there was a good profit to be

made between the cherry and green coffee, and Captain Cook wanted that profit as did American Factors, too. American Factors had originally taken only parchment coffee, then they finished drying it and if it was dry enough they turned it into green coffee, polished it. Then they used to sell it in Honolulu under May's name, Mayflower Coffee. After [Linzy] Child retired, and during the high coffee price time of around the early 1950s up till around 1957 when Curt Tyler took over, they put in a complete, total mill down in Kailua, about where the parking area is for the King Kamehameha Hotel today. And they took green coffee and so American Factors at that time went into the same type of an operation as Captain Cook had been in for many years. Coffee price, though, didn't last very long, this whole thing just collapsed fairly soon afterwards.

Unfortunately, for American Factors also, their overflow [which] was for all of their pulping water and everything, went into a lava tube that emptied out into the bay right by the pier. And it travelled between where it was being dumped into this hole into the ocean. It was long enough so that the sugar and the stuff in this water fermented and when it came out of this hole in the ocean, it smelled like the outflow of a sewer. Horrible, god! Nobody knew where this came from but eventually they put dye into the drain over by the coffee mill and here this dye came out into the ocean. But it was horrible. The same thing happens in any sewer lines, the sewage stagnates.

But the Factors thing as I say didn't last very long and Factors itself didn't continue too (long) after that. It used to supply nearly all of the Kona stores with food and everything else. They were purely wholesalers.

WN: Could it have been possible for a farmer resting on, say, Captain Cook land to acquire their own milling and pulping equipment, therefore escape some of this...

SG: I don't think they would let them do it.

WN: They wouldn't let them do it?

SG: I don't think they would let them do it. I don't know, I have never seen one of their leases, but I am sure that the lease was drawn up in such a way that they had to sell their coffee to Captain Cook (as cherry).

WN: Was there any kind of....I mean you people as being owners of the land, could you people have done something about it or could...

SG: We did, we did eventually. We didn't renew the lease.

WN: In what year?

SG: Nineteen fifty-seven, somewhere around there. We've always gone with the idea that if a person had a lease from us it was as though

they owned it, unless they did something that was absolutely wrong or contrary to the lease. Our leases today are a little different than they used to be. But all old leases used to, "Grounds for cancellation of the lease would be the manufacture of alcoholic spirits" or something like that. Now we've got a new phrase in there, "The growing of any illegal substances." (Laughs)

WN: Times have changed. (Laughs)

SG: They have changed and it took us a year and a half to get one guy off [the land] for growing marijuana and that. But, we found the pot. (Laughs) Well, most of our tenants don't want that kind of thing going on and they all accept the idea as being a good one when they sign their leases. The person we kicked out thought it was a great idea; eventually he changed completely. But, we've got some tenants, still, that are old-timers. We've got two Filipinos up above that almost weren't able to take care of themselves--rental and everything else--so we got tenants for them, we got tenants to take care of their places. But part of their [i.e. the new tenants'] agreement with us was that they had to pay these guys \$25 a month and pay for their utilities. And this is for as long as they lived. So I call that "Kealakekua social services." (Laughs) But at least it gives the guy some security, because where else are they going to go?

WN: People like Manago who have a lease directly through you, they paid less than someone who is subleasing from Captain Cook?

SG: Yes, now Manago is different. You're talking about a commercial lease, I think they paid \$100 a year, plus taxes.

WN: Per acre?

SG: No, for the place where the hotel was which is less than an acre. That was the highest rent, those days \$100 was a tremendous amount of money for a place like that. For the small area that it was. Those commercial areas always pay a little bit more, but I don't think any of them were much more than....like I say Manago's was the highest.

WN: How about the coffee farmers who leased directly through you?

SG: Old days, they were around \$10 or \$15 an acre. Today our rentals are based upon the old in between leases, or present older leases, based upon pounds of coffee. And in this area it was figured that good coffee land would produce 400 pounds of coffee per acre per year. And I mean that would be the amount that would be taxed. Out of, let's see, 1,200 pounds, I think, of coffee per acre and the lease was one-third of that. And we could take it either in parchment coffee or the price of parchment as of the first USDA [United States Department of Agriculture] market report of December of the preceding year. Coffee price now is up to \$1.50-something and so our rentals on those places are over \$500 per acre. We haven't gone up to the top amount when it got up a few years ago,

from 50 cents up to \$1.20, I thought, god, that was too much of a jump, so we went to a dollar and so we have always stayed 5 to 10 cents less.

END OF SIDE TWO

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SG: A few years ago when we started making out new leases we set them all up so that there'd be 30 years of a set rental, and we set our rental between 1973 to (1983) at \$250 per acre, per year. And 1983 it went up to \$400 and in 1993 it went up to \$600. Coffee prices around that time [1973] was such that we were getting something like \$100 per acre per year so it looked like this was going to be a good rental, but coffee prices got up so much that we're getting \$500 on a coffee lease, where on new leases we're getting \$250 an acre, half as much. We just never anticipated inflation going up as it has.

WN: During the '50s?

SG: Nineteen seventy-three was when the new leases came out at \$250. Before that we based it on the price of coffee, which was low. We never thought we'd ever get up to \$250 an acre. But we figured it might be somewhere around there; the coffee prices have gone up so much. And so we've got all these new leases that are 55 to 75 years in length that are not in line with today's inflation. I don't know why most of the tenants of Bishop Estate don't particularly care for their leases. Their leases are less than ours, their farm leases. They're, I think, \$100 per acre, per year plus a (3.5%) or something of the gross. And they hate like hell to pay the gross; if you're making money off of it, I can't see what the problem is. But most of the people that are kicking are not farmers anyway, they're pakalōlō growers or something like that. They're not legitimate farmers that are kicking. Everybody seems to want a lease from us, although one group of farmers who were finding all kinds of fault with the Bishop Estate lease found one portion of ours very disagreeable. That's when I mentioned earlier about (chuckles) growing illegal substances. But we've got people who want our leases all the time, even though it seems as though they're high. I don't know, there must be something we're doing right or something.

Unfortunately, there are not an awful lot of old people left, and most of that's because they've gone to Honolulu to where their kids are living. That happened when the coffee price went down and the Filipinos came in and the Filipinos have gone out. We used to--to keep coffee going--give out our leases for two years [for] free, so that the guy could clean the coffee up, and then charge a lease rent after that. And they were real low, about \$50 an acre or something. And the first two years, besides being free, they'd have to pay taxes, of course. And our problem was that these guys

would come in and take the place free, and when the rental came due they'd stay until as long as they could before we kicked them out and then they'd disappear. (Laughs) So it took about three years for me to find this out, and so then we gave them the third and fourth year free and they paid for the first two years. And that worked a little better. And we had a Filipino that went around rehabilitating places, and then he'd sell out to somebody else. But up until, I guess the middle '60s or maybe the '70s, we had a lot of vacant places. Nobody wanted them. Then all of a sudden every coffee shack, no matter how old it was, was liveable for somebody. I know down across the road, Kid McCoy was leasing, not coffee land, but just the houses for \$50 per month. It came up to an awful lot more than what any of us got per acre. I mean, for a five acre lot, \$600 is a hell of a lot per year.

WN: Why the influx of people?

SG: Because we have a lot of free papayas and mangos for the hippies. The hippies are what created this demand for houses. And they went into anything. One of the good sale items at Gaspro down here was polyethylene sheets that they used to put over the roofs of the houses during the rainy season to keep the roofs from leaking. They didn't maintain the places, they didn't keep the hale ali'i, the places were filthy.

WN: Did they actually rent or lease, or did they just move in without...

SG: A lot of them moved in until they were found. Fortunately most of our steady tenants didn't like the hippies and any time that we heard about them we'd immediately land on them and kick them out. But just before that was when the coffee prices went up, and so most of our places had someone in them at the time except some real crummy old places--probably four or five places. But the hippies have made every building in Kona today someone's home because housing is so short and it costs so much to get into any kind of apartment.

WN: For someone coming in with no intention of growing coffee, how would their rent be?

SG: Today's rent is set, the \$250 thing, it has nothing to do with coffee.

WN: How about before?

SG: Well, those who converted from coffee to something else already had the coffee lease. And anything they converted into, let's say, only thing they did convert to were macadamia nuts. And that was a higher production type of thing, and they didn't do it overnight. They kept their coffee farms going while their macadamia nut trees came up to bearing and as they started to bear then they cut their coffee trees down. So there was never a period where they had no income off the land. Most of our tenants stuck with either coffee or quit everything entirely. Takashiba was the only one [leasee]

that went to macadamia nuts. Others went to macadamia nuts who were able to buy their places.

WN: So people who went into macadamia nuts still paid a percentage of their gross?

SG: No, they paid a rental based upon the price of coffee.

WN: Even if they're not in coffee?

SG: Yeah. I thought we had to have a rental that was uniform for everybody. So that's why we changed to this other one--\$250 and I think somewhere along the line we're going to have to change that, but we can't change the existing leases.

WN: Not only the price of coffee, but did you take into consideration the ability of the piece of land that they're leasing?

SG: Yeah, (there is) a break above here, the road that goes across (is the boundary). Below that line they pay for 400 pounds per acre, and above that line they pay 350, which was considered by the University of Hawaii Extension Service as being the break line between good production below there and less production above. We were trying to arrive at a sale price for the land, so we used the same kind of figuring on determining a rental as we had originally used to determine a sale value. The sale value was determined by the University of Hawaii and Takao Uchimura, who was, I mentioned the other day, an accountant and the court practitioner here. He did a lot of book work for coffee farmers so he knew more or less what the income was per acre. We didn't set it at an average. We based the income on a high average return rather than average. We felt this might stimulate people into working harder.

WN: How about during the depression when coffee prices were very low. I can imagine the rent that you people got back was pretty low also.

SG: Well, as I mentioned, when the Territorial Legislature also forgave them taxes in the amount that we forgave rent, this lowered the amount of rental they paid then, too. So it was \$7.50, \$10.00 an acre, per year, about that.

WN: You mentioned earlier that you people could do that because you had...

SG: We had another income, while others who didn't have it would have difficulty, and I don't think gave that break to them.

WN: Where else did the income come from besides that?

SG: Cows. We had the ranch and my father used to say that his brother, Henry, used to say, "Oh, how wonderful it is to have all the farmers." My father just did not like to have all the farmers, (chuckles) he'd much rather have all the ranch.

WN: So during times when the coffee prices were bad the income from ranching was good?

SG: Relatively, during the depression, everybody suffered. My father sold a piece of land in 1932 because he had borrowed some money to build a house in Honolulu that we all lived in for quite a number of years while we were going to school. He borrowed \$30,000 in 1934. [The land was] between Kailua and Keauhou. To get out of debt he figured the best thing to do was to sell that piece of land that had no direct connection with the ranch. So he sold at auction at Bank of Hawaii and [for the] 400 acres got \$8,000. That same land today is selling for \$10 per square foot (chuckles) by the ocean. But he hated to be in debt--as I said earlier, this stigma of having to pay off all his father's debts, he and his brothers had to pay off his father's debts for land purchases years ago--so he sold that piece of land just to get out of debt. There wasn't other income coming in to take care of the money needs at that time. In 1957, when the coffee price collapsed, the beef price also collapsed. So since then cattle's been very poor until the last couple of years, and the price now is very good.

WN: Was that coincidental or there was some connection...

SG: I don't think there is any direct connection at all, it's just coincidental, it just happened. The price today is exceptionally good. But in the early '50s, we were getting 50 cents a pound for grass-fed beef. Probably the highest salary on the ranch was maybe \$250. Today, our highest price is about 92 cents, grass-fed, so it's damn near 100 percent higher. But our highest gross salary today, excluding myself, including perquisites--HMSA and everything else--is damn near \$1,000. So everything's gone up a hell of a lot.

When I first came home, in 1938, when we went to work we rode horseback from down here all the way up to the ranch. And to get up halfway up to the ranch, took an hour and a half. To get up to the top of the coffee [land] it took us 45 minutes. Today, we jump in the car and we're up to Papaloa. Where it took us three hours before, it takes us now about 45 minutes. We have to get there fast because we're paying people more, I guess. (Laughs) But everything we use today costs money. In the old days a horse didn't cost you anything except the shoes you put on them because we never fed them. Today, with cars constantly needing gasoline and oil and repairs and that, we would be better, from a ranching point of view, to have had quarters up ma uka and work out from there instead of having to go so far up to the cattle. One of the greatest advancements I thought at one point during the war was we drove up to the top of the coffee and we kept our horses up there. It saved us about a mile and a half riding every day, one way, which saved us a good deal of time. But as a result of getting to our work faster, we cut down the work week; we used to work six days a week when I first came home. And then we went to five and a half days and eventually went to five days, then we went to 40 hour week.

(Laughter)

WN: Next it'll be a three day weekend. (Laughs)

SG: Possibly, or a staggered four day week.

WN: Okay, maybe next time we're going to ask you more questions about ranching, okay?

SG: Okay.

WN: Let me just ask one more question, as far as for the future of coffee in Kona, what do you think?

SG: Well, last year I said five [more] years, at the most maybe six or seven. If five years (then) I guess should say now four. I don't think the new prices that are now available in Kona through--was it the Union Coffee Company or something--are going to create new plantings. I think it may help to restore old orchards because the new plantings are too costly to wait for production to come about. And a lot of the coffee is already either been neglected to the point where it's died down, died out completely or a lot of coffee areas have already been cleared. So there is not existing healthy trees that can be restored into good production. And as production drops, the mills are going to be less efficient and it's not going to be [because] of lack of coffee trees that coffee is going to go out, it's going to be lack of efficiency at the mill. Somewhere along the line it's just not going to be practical to keep the mill running.

WN: By lack of efficiency in the mill, what do you mean?

SG: If they get get 8,000 pounds a week and their break even point is at 9,000 pounds, then they're beginning to lose money because there's not enough going into the mill all the time. They can raise their (production) costs at the mill up to a point that the farmer is going to accept. And if that gets up too high and if the price of coffee comes down, they're [farmers] just going to quit. You look at the people who are raising coffee today, someone said the average age is 70 years old? There are an awful lot over 80 that are averaging out the 30-year-old coffee grower. (Laughs) I think there's a stigma to coffee for the younger Japanese; the drudgery of their parents, wedded to the thing over the years. Early up, late at night, the sacrifices that were made. I don't think people today are willing to make that kind of sacrifice. Coffee is demanding, very demanding. Macadamia nuts (aren't) that demanding. Macadamia nut price is good, and the macadamia nut price is also stable and I think has a chance for improving. While coffee prices are so unstable that it can do almost anything. I don't see anything that really gets people excited about going into coffee. People who are doing it, will do it. As those people become incapable of doing it, I hate to say die, but I don't think anybody new is going into it.

The other thing that is going to kill (coffee) it's like we go back to Torahichi Tsukuhara. They've converted to macadamia nuts, he started it. The kids got into quite a hassle with the old man over it, I don't know whether they told you this or he told you or what. See, they bought that land originally when we first offered it, at \$3,000 an acre, that's \$15,000. Their sons became very concerned because of the value of the land. Today, a place next door a couple of years ago sold for \$25,000 an acre. I'm glad they came to some kind of (agreement) even though it kind of broke up the family some. One of the sons it seems has sort of pulled out and everything else and the other two put up a husking plant and (storage) on the place. They're able now to get a better return because of their being able to do some of the work right on the farm. But if they had not been able to convince their father to deed this over to them, if he had died, they probably would have had to sell that farm--half of it--to get money to pay the inheritance taxes. And that would have been the end of the farm; it would have no longer been an economical unit. While at five acres, it is. That's the horrible thing about farming, and what's going to happen to coffee? Let's see, Henry Kunitomo, he's Bishop Estate lease, I think, isn't he?

WN: I think so.

SG: Well, even then if he's got a long term lease, as part of his estate can cost him quite a lot of money, maybe enough that the family can't afford to keep the land and they will have to sell the lease. The lease then would mean that there would be a change in use. Use then, would probably become residential or something like that. Which would be another way of coffee land's going out of production.

WN: How about if the farmer owned his land, how does that change?

SG: Well, one the problems, one of the things that happened in the Tsukahara case is that he just never realized his land got that valuable. The kids did, so the farmer hangs onto it, he dies. Let's say the court appoints an appraiser, the appraiser looks at a piece of land a quarter of a mile away that sold for \$20,000 an acre and they say, well, this is the same, so this (has) the (same) value, five acres, \$100,000. Probably [they have] to pay inheritance taxes--the worst, federal inheritance taxes--they may have to pay 25 to 30 percent (more) of that in taxes. None of us have that kind of cash on hand to pay that. I know when my father died, we were just lucky that I could borrow money from my uncle to pay inheritance taxes. And when my sister died, she owned a one-third interest and we're still paying off that. Nobody has the money, you know, if you have land, you don't have money. (Laughs) So that's why we've gone into a shopping center. That's why we've gone into land development here, house lots below Manago's. We had two studies made on the ranch; what we're going to do on our land. This was done by Belt Collins and it considers tourism and all sorts of different things.

WN: Did you plan to keep some in agriculture?

SG: Oh yeah, yeah. We even had a golf course. [SG points to map.] This is where the shopping center [Kealakekua Ranch Center] is today and this is the lower road to Napoopoo and there's Manago Hotel. This is multi-family residential. This we sold to Takashiba, one of the farmers, we sold another piece to a farmer here. In fact, Takashiba had nine acres in here, he has it in (macadamia nuts) that we sold him and this one school because we were trying to give the school some land for a school here because the people within this community were not wanting their kids to go to Konawaena School, where they would meet up with what they considered thugs of Kailua. (Chuckles) Kailua kids were always way ahead of ma uka kids. But the school department didn't want it. We were trying to create a residential area. This is a low cost multi-family residential in here. This is when we were going to go into one-acre lots. All of this was a way to create a community around the shopping center and the park which would be convenient where people could be one car families; they could walk to shop and that kind of thing. Instead of now everybody has to go some distance. The idea now is that we're going to put in some residential in through here. Except for the coffee lands we sold up in here, this has all been sold.

WN: What percentage of Kealakekua Ranch lands are we talking about?

SG: We're talking about 300 acres out of almost 11,000 acres.

WN: And the rest of that would be what?

SG: Ma uka is ranch. Excuse me, 350, 400, 500 acres, counting this down below to the ocean. And then the ranch starts about here.

WN: So a lot of this land that we're talking about developing is coffee lands today?

SG: Abandoned.

WN: Abandoned coffee lands?

SG: Yeah.

WN: How about as coffee farmers die and...

SG: Well all of the (area) that we're developing now below Manago's is either in use with macadamia nuts or this person here is--they've got coffee, two people. This wasn't coffee, the people built a house somewhere else and moved out. We cleared this up. This isn't coffee, we've cleared. These were abandoned coffee fields, Tsukahara had a place down here too. They were abandoned about the middle '60s and given up.

WN: Are you talking about mostly selling this land or maintaining...

SG: This is only the fee simple.

WN: And you're going to get rid of those lands under your jurisdiction?

SG: Yeah, well, we figured we better. I'm very concerned about fee simple ownership. There's quite a hassle today (among many) people, about not being able to own land. I don't think that fee ownership (should be) that important, particularly at today's prices. I think a person would be better off with a lease than he having to put down \$2.00 a square foot or something like that. I say \$2.00 because our costs are going to be about \$2.00 a square foot for our development. I thought we could sell it for \$2.00, two, three years ago, but our costs, from what I gather, are going to be somewhere around that, and so we're probably going to have to sell it for \$3.50 or something (like) that. If you could rent it, sell the lease for \$2.00 for the costs and rent it for 10 cents a square foot. In a way the guy is quite a bit ahead because it will take him 20 years before he gets up to the \$4.00 you might say that he might have to pay, and put a little lease with an option to buy, or something like that. But land isn't going to go down and then again, can it go up? (Laughs)

WN: I don't know, maybe, you know. I was wondering, say in 20 years, do you see any commercial agriculture in Kona?

SG: Yeah, macadamia nuts, avocados; as soon as Southern California gets the Mediterranean fruit fly, what's going to stop us from bringing pears in? (Laughs) I have not yet found anybody who's ever seen a fruit fly larvae in an avocado pear. Here you see larvae in a smashed pear, the egg has probably been put in the pear after the thing fell to the ground or something. But I've never seen--even the most rotten looking pear that may be sitting in the basket in the kitchen--any insects in them or anything. I think we've got a good opportunity for avocados eventually. The federal government is making preliminary studies now as to the coverage of the fruit flies, three of them. We've got traps all the way up to 7,000 feet on the ranch that are put there by the federal government. All of this is being done with the possibility of eventually going into some kind of eradication program which will probably cost \$60 million or something which seems outrageous. But if you figure that we can sell that much in the way of avocados and mangos to the Mainland and get it into markets that we don't have today, that this could be paid for very easily. I think it could be very beneficial to the islands.

I think one of the things that are going to limit people in Kona, unless the Board of Water Supply and the county changes some of the rules--and the Board of Health, we should go back to outhouses and let people put up tanks. Water's going to limit the number of people that are going to be here; in fact limit the number of people in the state. You let everybody have their own tank it'll save an awful lot of demand on the Board of Water Supply. I think

today it should not be considered an archaic form of utility, it should be considered a means of conservation. So should the outhouse, (chuckles) every time you flush the toilet it's five gallons.

Of course if marijuana is legalized we either will be in the chips or it won't be worth five cents because everybody will grow their own, which I think would be great. I've gotten to change my mind on this, I think people should be allowed to grow what they use, but nobody can grow enough to sell. Because it grows everywhere-- it grows in a person's apartment just as well as it grows, it seems, on the slopes of Mauna Loa in Kona. And if everybody is able to supply themselves, what's the percentage in crime for it. I mean, there's no reason for crime and all of that. It's all over with, there's no demand. It also might change some of the types of people we have in Kona. They might go home if they can raise it in Los Angeles, they'd go back to Los Angeles.

Someone I was talking to on the telephone about the time you came in who lives down in Napoopoo, he has what someone calls the "gangplank syndrome." He came here about 20 years ago; he lives down there but he doesn't want anybody else to live down there. So this gangplank syndrome is the idea of Guido Giacometti, who is president of Kamehameha Development Company, Keauhou Development and all of that, and he calls people this who come into a place, and once they get there then they pull up the gangplank so nobody else can come in. (Laughs)

WN: The gangplank syndrome?

SG: Yeah, and you go to some of these meetings, and who criticizes more the development of a new subdivision than some of these people who have been here for five years. So a lot of the ones who have come in recently I think we would be a lot better off without. I think they've created a lot of situations with the kids here in Kona that haven't been altogether good. Of course, some of those first hippies that came were absolutely filthy. One day--I mean this is as far out as you can get--the school bus went down the road right in front of, not our lawn, but the place next door to us where this guy is screwing this wahine right on the side of the road. And this sort of stuff happened when the first group came and there were all kinds of things that just--I don't know--made (a tremendous) impression on Kona. I think it hurt us all a great deal. We're all trying to raise our own kids (properly, but with) having this sort of living going on (made it very difficult). And a lot of these kids--university kids--the local kids felt, "Why the hell do I have to go to the university? These guys all went there, look what it did to them." We sometimes wish we had snow here during the winter, (it would) drive them out. (Laughs)

WN: There's a lot rain.

SG: Yeah.

WN: One more question before I go, what happened to coffee in Kona? Why is there no future in Kona?

SG: Labor intensive, too much labor [is required]. And to go back to the old Kona people whose families were involved, I think they associate coffee with the drudgery that was so demanded of their parents. It's an awful lot of labor to it; trimming, fertilizing, weeding, a lot of these things are easier today, particularly weeding because of herbicides and stuff they have. But an awful lot of work to it, and I don't think people want to put that much labor into something today.

WN: Do you think it's sort of a generational type of thing, something that's more suited to the previous generation, that type of crop?

SG: Well, I think it probably was a lot more productive than things they came from. And, to a lot of the Japanese who first came over here, it gave them independence. It got them away from their dependency on the plantation contracts and things like that. It did have a (period)--during the First World War and through there--where the prices were very good; it was a good income thing. In 1929, the prices of coffee were very good, this was evidenced by all the new cars that everybody started to buy and the garages that went up everywhere. Then the crash came and the price went down to nothing. The Second World War brought the price up again and that seemed to help, but it's demanding in time, and you talk to someone like Takashiba. When we went into the plan of having these ma uka lots go into one-acre lots rather than the size they are now, 3-1/2 to 5 acres, what they have been historically--he said that if they were one-acre lots there would be more coffee in Kona than there is, because people can do that after they come back from their regular work and they can maintain that much coffee. But if it's going to be anything more than that, it becomes too much for them. The same thing with macadamia nuts, the one-acre lots would create an awful lot of macadamia nuts in Kona. If the person can take care of that as sort of a hobby.

Oh, you know, you once asked me what my hobbies are.

WN: Yeah.

SG: One of them is ranching, it will always be. (Laughs)

WN: Okay, well, maybe next time we'll talk about your ranching experience.

SG: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 9-75-2-81

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Sherwood R.H. Greenwell (SG)

March 2, 1981

Captain Cook, Kona, Hawaii

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Sherwood Greenwell. Today is March 2, 1981, and we're at his office at the Kealahkekua Ranch Center in Captain Cook, Kona, Hawaii.

Okay, last time, we were talking about, in 1957, when Captain Cook [Coffee Company] was leasing lands from the Greenwell Estate, and they were in turn subleasing it to farmers.

SG: At the time, it wasn't the Greenwell Estate. Kealahkekua Investors was the name of the company, which was, in a way, the estate of Arthur Leonard Greenwell, my father, who died on June 3, 1951. Kealahkekua Ranch started in '61, and in the interim period, we had the estate under the name of Kealahkekua Investors. And we separated the lands of the ranch and the ranch operations from the securities, which were part of a partnership. My mother had a half of it, and my sister and I had a quarter apiece of Kealahkekua Investors. There are no more securities; we still have the ranch. (Chuckles)

Sort of similar to the problems of Bishop Museum and Bishop Estate, where the estate of Mr. Charles R. Bishop was tremendous when he died, and it was all securities which financed the Bishop Museum. They don't have enough money now out of those securities to run the Bishop Museum. Where[as] Pauahi Bishop's lands, which weren't worth very much at the time of her death, today are worth millions-- Bishop Estate. So, we were then a partnership at the time the Captain Cook lease expired.

WN: So, when the Captain Cook lease expired at that time, what percentage, would you say, of the land was leased to Captain Cook; what percentage was devoted to ranching; and what percentage do you think was leased to independents?

SG: It's easier to go on, not percentages, but acres. We leased to Captain Cook at that time about 350 acres. We had about a hundred acres of independents. The independents, there were three tenants that were below the road going to Napoopoo, and about 50 acres of

tenants below Manago's, between the two roads. And uh. . . . I'm beginning to run out of acres for independents. We probably had above here another 80 acres of independents, which would make a total of about 130 acres of independents.

WN: And ranch lands?

SG: We had ranch lands above the main road of little over 10,000 acres. And below the road, above the cliff of Napoopoo Bay, 200 acres. When coffee prices went up in '52, about 50 more acres came into production that had been abandoned 30 years before. They then became abandoned again at that time. At the peak of the coffee period, Kealakekua Ranch leased to independents, to the forerunners of Captain Cook--Brunner and Wallace. We probably had another 200 acres in coffee than we had at the period we were speaking of--350 acres to Captain and about 130 acres to independents. We had probably another 200 acres in coffee that went further up.

Those lands were first abandoned, I guess, probably because of the distance from the main road and the difficulty of getting up that far. Also, it was a lot wetter and not as comfortable living as it was lower down. At that point, there's quite a distinct weather change. Here on the main road, our rainfall ranges 35 to maybe 50 inches a year, 55, while up at the top of the coffee [lands] today, we have anywhere up to 100 inches, and at the top of this area, probably between 120 and 130. So, there's quite a bit again way up in the old abandoned fields. That coffee, it seemed, was cultivated back probably as early as 1905 and somewhere along that time. It peaked probably around World War I when coffee prices were high and then dropped quite a bit. Well, we probably lost a hundred acres. When I came back in 1938, I'd say, probably 130 acres of that way up land had already been abandoned by that time.

WN: These abandoned lands, what became of them?

SG: Well, they adjoin the ranch lands. They were fenced in and became parts of the cattle operation.

WN: Was that more profitable to do--to convert it into ranch lands?

SG: There was no other use at that time that people thought of. Even today, from a climatic point of view, it's too far ma uka for macadamia nuts. There are avocado trees growing up there that are in the pastures that have been there ever since I can remember, and they've never had any fruits. So, it's getting too far ma uka for even avocados. Even today it's in ranching use, because there are no other orchard crops that we now have that will grow up there satisfactorily. So, ranching is the use. Of course, the other use is residential. We've got, of those upper areas, in one section, 55 acres, that are agriculture, if you call agriculture a five-acre farm with a couple horses on it.

We have two operations that are very different from what the early uses are, and probably a lot better. One is the growing of roses and the other is a tomato operation--hothouse tomatoes. So, these are new uses for that upper land. Of course, operations that couldn't have been viable years ago because there wasn't the water necessary for the tomatoes or for roses. There wasn't the technology either at that time that has made this type of an operation practical. So, residential use is creeping in all over agricultural lands.

We're going to use a part of that area for the extension of our cymbidium operation. Not for our big standard cymbidium but for miniatures. Miniatures will grow lower down. They seem to do well at that elevation, where they don't do too well up at 3,500 feet where we're growing them or down here. So, it's sort of an intermediate area that the miniatures seem to do well at.

WN: What is this again?

SG: Miniature cymbidiums.

WN: I'm not familiar with that.

SG: Orchids? (SG points to photos on wall.) These are these orchids here, miniatures. That's a miniature. That one above there is a miniature. They're becoming very popular. In fact, I was told the other day that the Japanese operation above Glenwood is going over to miniatures because they are more popular in Japan than the standards are. I guess, probably, another reason is not purchasers' popularity so much as growers' freight problems of sending large stalks from here to Japan. The smaller ones, of course, you get a lot more stalks into boxes. Of course, the other reason why some of these smaller flower stalks are getting popular is that houses aren't as big as they used to be. There's not the room to put in a big vase of large stalks. But these uses of that area are completely new from the early days when those lands were abandoned as coffee and reverted to ranching. These uses weren't available at that time. They're completely new products in Kona.

WN: And this is mainly because of the water? The water system coming in?

SG: No, we've got new people who are not wedded to any one type of agriculture. They're coming in with new ideas and bringing these new ideas with them. With us on the ranch, we were just looking for another source of income, rather than cows. I had as a hobby some cymbidiums that I'd gotten back about 1949. They didn't do well down here. I took them up above, and eventually, one of these plants just constantly flowered after we'd gotten into the maile business. I figured that it was telling me something. I was overlooking the adaptability of this cymbidium plant. So, we tried six varieties that we got on the coast, left entirely up to the guy on the Mainland to figure out which ones were the best.

Because I didn't know anything about it. My hobby, interest, was only to see an occasional flower. It wasn't that I got into it up to my ears. We've gotten into that now very seriously, but I look towards our use of three or four acres of land up there as producing possibly twice as much gross income as the ranch eventually.

But this is also because of having water. The ranch has more cattle today because of our putting in a pumping system in 1960 that pumped brackish water from the ocean all the way up to the top of the ranch. Water is essential for everything. Only trouble is, county water and, of course, the water we had before, both are fairly salty. So, it's not too good for an indoor type of irrigating operation. You've got to have a good deal of fresh water to go with it to be able to leach out the salt. I know the operator of the tomato operation is having the problems of accumulated salt. We had it down here in our hothouse with young meristemmed cymbidium plants. So, we moved two tanks that we had, put them in next door to the hothouse, and used the hothouse roof to fill the tanks. We use that water primarily for our young cymbidium plants.

WN: Are you leasing land out to farmers who want to go into orchid raising?

SG: We have one area leased out to someone who is growing flowers, ornamentals and that kind of thing. I don't know whether he'll be growing orchids or not. We gave to the University of Hawaii some years ago three acres of land for the experimentation of crops other than coffee. This is back about 1949 or '50. I felt at the time coffee was going out because of our loss of tenants. Tenants were moving out. The old-time farmers that had dedicated their lives to coffee were getting physically to a point where they could no longer take of their coffee and were moving to Honolulu where their children lived. The farms then were taken over by Filipinos that had come in from the plantations almost at an age of retirement. A lot of them used the houses and the farms more as a home than as an operation to run the farm. As a result, a lot of the land became abandoned until coffee prices started to come up again around the '50s.

The lessons that we hoped the University were going to show in the crops that they put in there, nobody ever learned. I guess the only person that really took notice of the macadamia nuts that were planted there. . . . Their macadamia nuts, avocados, and cherimoyas. Cherimoya, I guess, they figured they had to put something exotic in. You find few people that like cherimoyas to the point where they would be eaten similarly to papayas, you know, every day. To me, one cherimoya lasts me a year. (Chuckles) I don't need another one. A half of one, probably. The avocados, they've got some very good varieties there. They have enough varieties so they've got some of them bearing sometime during the year. There're always avocados available. There isn't a tenant that went into avocados. There was one who went into (coffee) when the coffee

prices were high. I think he thought that (coffee) would be a nice thing to get into, (but) once he really got into it and found out the work involved, he planted avocados and persimmons, which did very well up there at that elevation. I think it just became too much work and he quit.

The one person that really benefited from the macadamia nuts--and he got into it really, I think, possibly before the University put up their plantings--was [Yoshitaka] Takashiba, who was interviewed already. I think he was in that [slide] show the other night. Not only did he have on our lands nine acres below here, but he also had six acres up ma uka, which he has since sold to a Mainland haole guy that's come in. I hope he takes care of it as well as Takashiba. Takashiba's an excellent farmer. He also has an excellent perception as to what's going to happen. This is shown in his conversion from coffee to macadamia nuts. It was rather interesting, I think, the remark he made the other night. Oh, I think it's in the tape that he said, or he made some reference to the fact that coffee probably per acre would bring him more money than macadamia nuts, but it [coffee] was more labor intensive.

A few years ago we tried to have passed by the planning department a one-acre subdivision above here, which would put in probably around 400 one-acre lots. Our plan was first done in 1961 by Belt and Collins. We later, two years ago, were going into sort of partnership with Dillingham, who owns the adjoining land, to put in one big subdivision of one-acre lots. Takashiba told me that he felt that if that had gone through, there would be more coffee grown than there is now with the five-acre lots, because a one-acre lot was enough for somebody to handle after he'd come back from work in the afternoon. He felt that one-acre lots would not only increase the amount of coffee grown in Kona but would also make a more lasting viable coffee industry. It wouldn't become the burden that it was to people before.

Of course, the other thing, in the earlier days, on off season, the time before harvesting and after trimming, there weren't job opportunities for the farmers. There was a criticism--probably doesn't hold as much today because there're not as many schoolteachers that are in the coffee business--but a lot of the schoolteachers that came back here, came back here because they had coffee farms--their families had coffee farms. The feeling with many people was that these teachers were more concerned during the coffee picking time with getting back to the farm than the kids were. (Chuckles) Well, the coffee schedule really ended because the families could no longer get the kids to come back and spend the time on the farms to pick coffee, which the coffee schedule was supposed to take care of. But those teachers that had coffee farms were more concerned about their coffee operations really than they were on their teaching. The teaching gave them the security of a steady income, while the coffee income was what they were really concerned about.

Ralph Kiyosaki, who used to be the head of the school department, told me years ago one of the worst things that could happen to any school was the return of the students of that school, to the school as teachers. It brought no new ideas. There was nothing new that stimulated the community, while their going into another community brought ideas from their home community into a new community. I think this was one of the problems. Well, he mentioned Kona as being probably the worst, or the best example of this.

And there were an awful lot of teachers who came back to Kona that were primarily here because of their families' coffee operations and schoolteaching was a good, guaranteed income. The extra jobs, though, today, are part-time jobs. There're some of those. But it's reversed. Where, before, the coffee farmer used the farm as his primary income and did something outside in the off season, today's primary income is outside the farm and he uses the farm as additional income. So, that's been reversed. [Torahichi] Tsukahara, who we talk about fairly often, is one of a number of our tenants, or Captain Cook tenants, that we used to have working on the ranch for, oh, between two to three months every year on the off season. Tsukahara eventually became a steady employee of the ranch after his sons were old enough to be able to do more of the work on the farm. A lot of them took jobs like this.

When I first became a member of the Board of Supervisors, the county road operations were almost a form of subsidized income to a lot of these people. We had on the payroll here in Kona in 1949-- my first year on the Board of Supervisors--about 150 employees. Some of them worked two days a week; some of them worked three; some of them only came in before Christmas or before elections (laughs). It was sort of subsidy money to them. We eventually changed that because of changing income. Farmers were getting more money in their farming at that time. We then set up a permanent county crew. We were getting more mechanized. We found out it wasn't a good idea to have one truck driven by five different people a week. Nobody took care of the equipment. So, we got down to permanent (crews). And coffee prices had gone up, so farmers were doing better at home. There were other jobs then becoming available, mostly in construction and that kind of thing, which fitted in with an awful lot of our farmers, because they're all very adept at either stonework, concrete or carpentry. All of these opportunities were starting to come into Kona just after the war [World War II].

WN: So, even when coffee prices were really high during the '50s, farmers still looked for other work?

SG: Mm hmm [yes]. See, what happened by that time, a lot of the farmers were quite old. Because of their age, they were no longer able to take care of their places. By that time a lot of them were alone here, and they weren't able to take care of themselves, and they went to their sons' or daughters' places, mostly in Honolulu. Of

course, they [sons or daughters] were all there because they were aggressive, became well educated. The kids that came later, as the job opportunities became available, stayed in Kona, but there was quite a brain drain in the '30s and '40s. The aggressive ones all left and took other job opportunities. Not only in the islands, but you'll find a lot of them in Southern California that were from here. There weren't the jobs. After the parents left, the people who did come in to take their places were not as dedicated as. . . . They weren't the farmers. They didn't like to see as well manicured a farm as the old people liked or maintained. So, things changed quite a bit around that time.

And I think the Filipinos' needs are a lot less in most instances from a food point of view and from interests. One of our cowboys said his wife used to spend quite a bit of money. He said, "Gee, I'd like to be like one of these Filipinos. All they buy is rice and some bagoong, and everybody's happy."

I said, "The thing is, you want more." (Laughs)

One of the reasons, I guess, was that most of those Filipinos that came in had no families. There was no real incentive for them to-- some of them were promoters. We had one that would take a piece of land. . . . We had so many farms that were abandoned that we first started by renting them out two years free, and they paid the taxes. Then, the rental would start on the third year, and would be low for those years, and then would work up. At that time, rentals, I think, were around \$50 an acre. This guy would come in, work like hell, get a place all cleaned up, and then he'd sell it to somebody else. He would be always in here about every two years to find out where the next place was that he could go to. He would find people that would take these farms after he got them going. But most of them, even after that, would decline.

WN: You know, in '57, when the Captain Cook [Coffee Company] lease expired, I think you briefly explained it last time, but can you give me the details as to why you didn't renew their lease and what became of the lands?

SG: A point that you made in the slide show the other day was. . . . Now, who was it? There was somebody else who spoke during that time, which I felt was very good.

WN: Mr. Egami, who spoke about you're bound to the company?

SG: Yes, but did he get up and speak? No, that was only in the slide show itself. Who got up and spoke? Oh, the last person who spoke. He said that there was someone at his table who said that type of culture also worked very well with marijuana. (Laughs) Who was that guy? I can never remember his name. I think a point that he made was very good. "I owe my soul to the company store" kind of thing we looked at as being the type of operation that was going on

with Captain Cook. The financing was so in the control of Captain Cook that the farmer had very little opportunity to sort of build up anything. I think it showed in those farmers of ours that were independent. Their kids were sent away to better educational opportunities. I think of Goto here that had a store and some coffee next to Manago's. One son is a doctor at Honolulu Medical Group; another son was administrator for Kuakini Hospital and was the assistant principal up here at Konawaena. The independents, I guess through financing or purely looking at their operations and the opportunities that went through their operations, felt that as independents, there was more opportunity. So, the families were more aggressive.

WN: How profitable was Captain Cook at that time? Or was it at all?

SG: I know nothing about its finances. I'm sure it was profitable. Of course, you can't look at profit today and profit years ago and compare them. You've got to look at them in the period. Like a profit today on a farm, you might say, you have to have a net. . . . Well, let's go back to that time. We sold some of our farms to those farmers that were leaving Captain Cook. The value of the land was determined by Takeo Uchimura, who was an accountant. He was a court practitioner and he had been a judge here in Kona--a court magistrate. He did some legal work for us. He made our leases out and this sort of stuff. To come to a value, I asked him if he could work out something, and he worked it out with the Extension Service. But mostly, I think, he used his knowledge of the farmers whose accounts he took care of.

The lands at this level he arrived at a value, a net income of \$600 a year. This is after taking out labor for the family and everything else. Of course, coffee prices then were pretty good. We sold the land to the farmers, and we capitalized that at 5 percent and we sold them at \$3,000 an acre. That was up so far, and then it broke and went down to \$2,750 above that, because production isn't as good up there as it is in this area here.

Today, I don't know whether a farmer would be as interested in \$600. He probably would like to see something, with today's prices, somewhere around. . . . With his own labor, he probably figures his own labor at the same cost of labor back in '57 or he wouldn't figure his labor so much because it'll be more of a part-time operation than it was then. So, he probably figures that he should be netting around \$2,000 an acre. I don't think you can use inflation as the only way of saying this thing is higher. He's looking at it from a completely different point of view than he did before when it was his only livelihood.

WN: The reason why I ask that was, I was just wondering if they were in financial trouble at that time when their lease expired?

SG: No, no. I don't think they would have been so sensitive about losing it if they were in financial trouble. They were very upset

about losing it.

WN: So, what became of the lands that they had?

SG: Some of those lands, we sold to the subtenants--the farmers on the land. That first year, we sold a hundred acres. Coffee prices plummeted down that year. They just went to hell completely. The next year, nobody wanted to buy their land. Let's see now. Then, we did sell some other lands right along here. Probably we sold another 15 or 20 acres. We took 50 percent down and the balance was paid between the 11th and 20th year, and we charged an interest of 2 percent in an attempt to get the farmers to (buy) their land. (We wanted to) get the land into the hands of the farmers.

We had been approached by someone in Honolulu, Duffy Mendonca, in '57 when we were starting to sell the land. He (offered to) buy all of our lands up here for \$3,000 an acre. I said, well, our idea was to sell it to the farmer who had lived on it all his life practically so that he could have it. He said, "Oh, I'll do that." (Laughs) Profit comes into something like that again. The \$1,200,000 looked pretty good at that time, but we didn't do it because we wanted the farmers to have them.

WN: Were there farmers who just left because they didn't want to buy the land after Captain Cook lost their lease?

SG: There was only one farmer, Young. He lived way up ma uka in not one of the better farming lots. What they did was, they made a list themselves of the people who wanted to have direct leases that first year. Then we told them that we would not give them direct leases but we would sell them the land. He was the only one that pulled out. He went to Ka'u, and I don't know what he did over there. He pulled out.

WN: So, all the farmers that were subleasing on Captain Cook's lands . . .

SG: No, not all. That first year, we were taking a hundred acres back a year. That first year, of the first 100 acres, there was one person who pulled out. He used to have 3-1/2 acres or something like that. Someone else filled in for him, so it was about a hundred acres that was sold. The following year, I guess coffee was going down and Captain Cook was not as serious about holding these people over three years, and we got it all back then. We didn't stress the purchasing anymore. So, we'd give them leases. They couldn't afford (to purchase because of the price decline).

WN: Some were content to just . . .

SG: Lease, yeah. The thing that they wanted more than anything else was independence. To be able to go and buy a car wherever they wanted to without Captain Cook's breathing down their necks and telling them they should buy a car from them when they owed 'em so

much money and this sort of thing. It gave them cash in their pockets. They could go and buy things at other places. They weren't so bound to the Captain Cook Company store, where they could buy something and get credit.

Oh, getting back to this fellow again the other night, he said at that time there was nowhere else for a lot of these people to go to get credit. So, as bad as the system may have looked later in the light of other things, at the time, it was a good system. He said nobody starved. So, things under different circumstances either look better or worse, you know. But when that time came when we no longer renewed their lease, my view of it was very different. Mine was one of individual independence, which I thought, in that day and age, everybody should have.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Okay, after Captain Cook lost their lease, the lands that you leased directly to the farmers, did their rates change at all? Did they go lower or higher?

SG: We leased land to Captain Cook for \$10 an acre. Captain Cook charged them \$20 an acre. Let's cut this and let me get that information.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

SG: . . . the Captain Cook tenant. (SG examines a lease agreement.)

WN: Arakawa?

SG: Arakawa. This is a typical example of what we've been talking about. All of Arakawa's family was in Honolulu. Arakawa, when he left, sold his farm. And I guess the guy must have borrowed the money from the credit union. Sold it to Isamu Kuneshige and Earl Kuneshige, who took over the place in 1960. Arakawa had acquired it in October of '59. So, this is as soon as he could have gotten the place after the Captain Cook lease [expired], because the Captain Cook thing was pau probably that year or in '58. I don't think he was one of the first. If he'd been one of the first, he would have probably bought the place. He may have stayed, because all of those who bought have stayed and their farms have been beautifully maintained. Kuneshige, because of ill health, eventually left and somebody else has the place today.

The rental, we tried to tie in to the price of coffee. For the first ten years of the term, the rent was 200 pounds of grade one parchment coffee per acre per year, or it was the value of that

determined by the United States Department of Agriculture Marketing Service. The local parchment price as of the first week in December of the preceding year. But the rent was never to go down below \$50 per acre per year. So, this made his rental--basic rental--\$30 more than what he was paying to Captain Cook. But the thing you've got to remember is the Captain Cook lease was 20 years old then. So, it was based upon an entirely different coffee price and everything else 20 years before, which would have been just after the depression, still the time when coffee prices were very bad. The first ten years would take you to '69 and the remaining ten years of the term--20-year lease--was 400 pounds of coffee per acre and the rent per acre no less than a hundred dollars per acre.

We still have some of these leases that have two, three years to go. The price (laughs) of coffee was something we'd never ever imagine would ever go up to what it is today. Coffee prices today are around a dollar fifty [\$1.50] a pound, which brings a hundred-pound bag up to \$150. And even higher. Union Coffee Company, from what we gather, has paid as high as \$200 per bag. Well, \$200 per bag at 400 was (\$800) an acre a year. Our rental, when the price went up a couple years ago to \$1.25, we went up to \$1.00. When it went up to around \$1.30, we went up to \$1.20. This year, we've gone up to \$1.50. So, our rentals now are four times that, (\$600) a year.

WN: Per acre?

SG: Per acre. Our new leases--to give you an idea as to what we think the rents at this time should be, based upon new leases that are now eight years old--those leases, the rental is \$250 per acre per year. In 1983, January 1, those change to \$400 per acre per year. These are five-acre lots. Smaller lots are a little higher. Anything under three acres is a little higher. They start now at \$400 and then go to \$500. And '93 up is \$700. And the ones that are \$250 now will be \$250, \$400, \$600 per acres for those five-acres in size, or over three acres. Those rates are all a hell of a lot lower than these that were based on 400 pounds of coffee.

WN: So, you're not going by the price of coffee anymore?

SG: We do on these leases. But our new leases that are now eight years old. . . . What I'm trying to point out is, when we went into the new leases at \$250 an acre per year, that was a good deal higher than what we were getting out of a 400-pound coffee lease, because coffee prices were so much lower then. So, we made them [new leases] higher because we gave them a guarantee of a rate for ten years. We gave them a rate that changed every 10 years for a period of 30 years to satisfy some of the places that they got mortgages from and from the 31st year on, our rentals are all negotiated. We figured if there's going to be an option--I didn't think it would make much difference whether we had a 55-year lease or we had a 75-year lease. Those first leases were 55-year leases

with a 20-year option. Some people prefer the 55-year lease, although most of them wanted 75-year leases. Someone came in the other day, about my age, and he said, "I'm not going to live that long. I'll take the 55-year lease." (Laughs) That's still too long. But I was thinking at one time, as sort of a novelty of it, a 99-year lease would sound kind of interesting. (Laughs)

WN: The farmers that are leasing now, what happens when they die?

SG: It goes the heirs or assigns.

WN: To their heirs?

SG: Yeah. Whoever they willed it to. Every lease is made out to the heirs and assigns as whoever they will it to.

WN: That's almost as good as buying the land, then?

SG: We hope that in our leases we try to be as fair as possible, and the person who leases our land has it for his use as though he owned it. There were times we found some people who turned out to be different later, like one (laughs) I was just talking about on the phone. But on the whole, I think our tenants are all quite satisfied that we don't interfere with their tenancy at all. They aren't today like they were before, there used to be lessors before that used to retain fruit rights and other things on the farmers' land and would come in and pick the mangoes off the tree, this sort of stuff. As far as we're concerned, always, our tenants, if they paid their rent and they took care of their lands, had the lands as though they owned them.

WN: Did you give any kind of lesser rates or anything if they choose to stay or go into agriculture?

SG: No, these five-year, \$250 rentals were based upon an agricultural use, and they still came within that \$600 net before. I mean, it all fitted in together with the rental.

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

SG: (SG examines lease agreement.) Nineteen fifty-nine, 200 pounds of coffee per acre per year, and the rental was \$260. See if I can get one of '77. The rental in '67 was just under \$200--\$99.33 for half a year. So, that shows that the coffee prices went down. Oh, here in '63, coffee prices had gone down to where the rental was \$82.78 for half a year--be \$164.

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

WN: Okay. Let's go back. In 1938, after school . . .

SG: We're talking ranch now.

WN: You returned to Kona, right? But before ranching, you were talking earlier about some of the recreation that was in Kona at that time about 1938. Can you sort of tell me something about it?

SG: Kona was divided into a number of different community districts. And the community districts included a number of kumiais within these districts. The kumiais weren't altogether restricted to the Japanese. There were others that belonged to kumiais, too. Not that I ever belonged to one, but I know some of our cowboys did because of their friends who were also cowboys and stuff that belonged to kumiais. It also gave them a kind of security, mostly (chuckles) in the dying department, unfortunately. Each of these districts, and I think probably there were six or seven of them, or as I think we counted earlier, possibly eight, had their own athletic programs. They competed between each other.

I was a member of the Pirates basketball team. Pirates was the name that the Captain Cook community had for its athletic (teams). They were the Pirates. Kona Central's was probably one of the biggest community districts. All of what now is known as Kealahakua and Kainaliu was a part of their team area. We played fairly regularly. Our games were all held up at Konawaena. The other gymnasium games were held at Kailua, a gymnasium which is now gone but was where the earlier King Kamehameha Hotel was--in fact, a portion of the area that the present hotel is on.

Oh, there's sort of a story behind that. That gymnasium was supposed to have been built down at Honaunau somewhere in the early '30s. The lumber was all stacked down there, ready for construction. Mr. [Julian] Yates, one of the [county] supervisors at the time, did not get the vote out of the Honaunau area that he expected, and the material was all packed up on trucks (chuckles) and taken down to Kailua. And the gymnasium was put down there.

The communities today, it's rather hard to think of them as being as active as they were then, with all their different athletic organizations. Basketball was usually a senior, post-school-graduation group. There was no football in Kona at that time because of the coffee schedule. School was out for the coffee picking period during the football season, although Kona had had prior to the coffee (schedule) some exceptional football teams and some of them almost semipro. There were a number of Little League baseball teams at that time and senior baseball teams. The players on the teams started sort of upon graduation from Konawaena. Some of them would play up to probably 10 years or 15 years after that.

I don't know whether there are these types of games today. There may be, but there are people who play now in what is known as the makule league that are the people who used to play then in 1938 when I came back. (Chuckles) They outgrew one age group, and then there was a void in between, and now are old enough to be in this makule, which I think starts at something like 55 years old. But

there was a great deal of competition through Kona between these different organizations. It took a lot of the evenings and time. Sunday afternoon, baseball season, the turnout up at Konawaena was fantastic.

WN: This is for high school?

SG: No, these were the baseball games between the different districts. Everybody'd turn out. There wasn't very much else to do. You either were not interested in that and went fishing. There were very few people that ever went hunting as they do today, because transportation was a problem. Today, our employees go hunting, because they jump in a jeep and they're up there in a matter of an hour and half. In those days, to get that far up, it took you four hours to ride up there on a horse.

After that, my playing on basketball, (I was pau). I never was a baseball player. You can play a lot longer at baseball than you can at basketball. The first year, I think, we won the Kona--in fact, I'm sure we did--the Kona basketball championships. We had our championship dinner down at Ke'ei. I first learned to drink sake down (laughs) there. Or how not to drink it. I quickly learned that you don't swap glasses with someone who's been drinking sake while you've been drinking beer. (Laughs) I learned very quickly. The second year, we had all been out of high school long enough to have picked up a number of depleting kind of habits--drinking and smoking. I think we lasted three or four games (laughs) and we gave up. I'm afraid we weren't very persistent.

Then, on Sundays, many of us used to go down to the Kona Inn. Kona Inn was like a club to a lot of families in Kona. We'd go down in the morning, play tennis, swim. The old people would play cribbage, dominoes, or bridge. They always had a very good lunch. Kona Inn encouraged people to go down. They gave us a couple rooms, one for the girls and one for the boys to dress in. I think we helped maintain an income during a period of time when the Inn didn't have much of an income. There were also a number of people that would come over for weekends from Hilo. So, it was really quite a get-together all the time. And quite different from today. The day of sport coats and neckties. Nobody was ever seen in anything as informal as an aloha shirt. (Laughs) I don't know how the hell we lived through that period. Think of wearing a wool sports jacket. I don't know how we didn't melt and sweat. But it was a hell of a lot of fun.

That continued up until the war [World War II]. It didn't continue much after the war. When it was all over, management at the Kona Inn had changed. George Cherry had been the earlier manager and he had been there from the time the hotel had been built. This type of use was encouraged. At the end of the war, some of the new managers felt that it was a tourist hotel and it wasn't one to cater to the locals, and more or less told people that, and that

was the end of that. It wasn't what it was earlier. Of course, many of us by that time were getting involved in other things, families, and that didn't allow us to be as extravagant as going down there.

Oh, something on the hotel. The Inter-Island Steam Navigation Company that built it originally to help encourage the use of its ships from Honolulu--the Humuula, and the Haleakala, and the Waialeale, and the Hualalai--bought a piece of property first to build their hotel where Tanaka's Quarry is today. Walter Ackerman, who was the manager of the Bank of Hawaii here, tells the story of finding out about this and telling Tom Strathairn, who was the head of Inter-Island Steam Navigation Company on this island, "That was a terrible place. They should build it somewhere down below where it would be more attractive." It so happened that he knew that this piece of land was available in Kailua that might make a good place. As a result of that, Inter-Island bought what is now the area where the Kona Inn shops are, and they never used the area above. The county used to use the site for it's quarry and used to pay Inter-Island Steam Navigation Company, I think, it was 10 cents a cubic yard of rock that they took out of it. Tanaka, I think, today owns the property or whoever it is. It's just been sold. But the Kona Inn was quite a place. Everything was, oh, horribly more formal than it is today.

I think the (best) program that has come about in the last few years is the senior citizens' program that has brought people together in their later years who probably never saw each other unless there was funeral or a wedding. I think it's been wonderful. I'm getting closer to the time when I'm probably going to be a member. (Laughs)

Another recreation that has become very popular in Kona in the last few years has been fishing. Everybody in Kona likes fishing. I remember as a kid going down fishing off the rocks, bringing home a humuhumu that you had to skin because the skins were so damn tough, and then all the things were full of bones. I was asked a couple years ago whether I knew how many boats there were in Kona, and I hazarded a guess that maybe there were 200. And I was told that there are 700 licensed boats in Kona that are parked in somebody's garage. It's almost impossible to imagine.

A lot of those that used to participate in more team type things have gone to this type of recreation. I guess, probably, the team type sports, a lot of them, take place at times when either there's some good T.V. show on a Sunday afternoon or a football game or something. And at night, very few people go out. I think the school probably commands the greatest audiences of any sports now that take place. Football at Konawaena has brought out an awful lot of people. I know one person, when my son was at HPA [Hawaii Preparatory Academy], was at all of the games. I said, "Is your son playing?"

He said, "No, I like football." And he'd go over; he'd follow the Konawaena team. So, there are a lot of people [to whom] live football still has a great appeal, as it did before the coffee school schedule. The old-timers, they just loved it.

WN: So, when the school schedule was adopted, they just cut football?

SG: Well, the summer vacation was really a fall vacation and started around the 16th of August and went through to about the 16th of November. So, that took most of the football season. The community associations didn't get into football, because that would have only hurt the reason for the schedule as it was. It would take kids away from picking coffee and helping their families. I think eventually, though, these kids found other things to do--possibly (because of) family transportation. Kids found other things to do a lot better than picking coffee.

There were probably five or six years of where there was a question, (should) the coffee schedule be continued or (should) they give it up? This became quite a hassle. It was kept, I think, longer than it was practical. Probably for one reason more than anything else, and that was that a lot of the farmers felt that it was a concession that they had somehow gotten that was very important to them. Not that it was that worthwhile to them, but it was a concession that government had given them and they wanted it sort of there, even though it wasn't working out as well as it should. So, I think that probably extended the. . . . And it also---you got a feeling from the attitude of some people that if you were for going back to the regular schedule, that you were an enemy to coffee. This was a feeling, I think, that a lot of people had who would like to have seen the thing [coffee schedule] dropped. It took some time and some guts for most of the people to overcome that feeling. So, I think it did continue longer than it should have.

I think it would have been better for the kids and everybody that it would be over with sooner. Kids going into college off the Kona schedule, college almost had started before they graduated, and I don't think it helped that type of education--you know, ongoing education--for the kids. I don't think it helped in getting some of the best teachers they could get. I know, when I came back, one of the teachers up there liked it because it was easier travelling during the fall than it was during the summer because the rates were lower at the hotels (laughs), and there weren't as many people. You know, that doesn't necessarily make a good teacher. (Laughs) And I think another trouble was that the summer courses at the University for teachers, the local [Kona] teachers couldn't use them because they were in session. I don't think that helped our system here at all or the quality of schooling for the kids.

I know, one year, we were cutting back across the states, and there was a kid in Idaho fishing at a stream where we were fishing. We asked him how come he wasn't in school. He said, "Oh, spud vacation."

What they did was, school was let out at the height of the potato harvesting season for two weeks. Something like that probably would have been a better way of doing it. Going on the regular schedule and then just having a vacation tied right into the harvesting period. Because one of the problems that used to happen. . . . Coffee becomes pickable almost regularly seven months after it has flowered. The flowering takes place January, February, or March. If it's been dry, let's say up until March. There's a heavy rain then and then the (coffee) comes in seven months after that. So, there can be quite a variation in the picking time. If the vacation is set, a lot of times, they had to let school out in August and July sometimes so the kids could go and pick. Some kids would be let out in November so they could go home and pick because there was still a lot of coffee to pick.

So I think, at the beginning, there was a real reason for it and I think it worked out very well. I think it strengthened the ties within the family where they all were working together for something. I know it's been said at times, if you had someone applying for a job that came from Kona, he was a good worker. He had good loyalty and he was a good worker. I think that all comes from that period where everybody in the family worked hard together. But kids got other interests and things that weren't available to them earlier. Of course, a lot of that had to do with transportation. The family had a car; the kids got out more and got together. While in the old days, you walked to school and you walked home. There wasn't any time for anything else. And too, some of them would go to language school. They had a long school day, and there wasn't much opportunity to do anything else. But it's a change that took place everywhere. I don't think Kona is that different.

WN: Those teams that played basketball, representing the different districts, who sponsored them? As far as paying for uniforms, for example?

SG: Well, Captain Cook Coffee Company paid for our uniforms. Blue and white, and on the back it said "Captain Cook Coffee Company." (Laughs) So, they got advertising this way. The associations, even today, go out for drives--money-making drives--and the ranch contributes to that as a part of the community. So, there were different ways of doing this.

WN: Did the kumiais put in some money? Parents?

SG: I guess they probably did. I'm sure they did, because the programs weren't that cheap when you think of. . . . I think, uniforms, a lot of times, too, in some instances were paid for by the families of the participant, this sort of thing. When you figure the number of uniforms, it builds up into quite a lot--basketball team and baseball team. Teams, because baseball, as I say, there're usually two or three leagues that were going all the time.

WN: What districts were there that had teams?

SG: Basketball, I remember, we used to play teams from Hookena and Honaunau, then our team here at Captain Cook. Central's was Captain Cook and Kainaliu. Honoalo came later. Kailua, Holualoa. I'm not sure whether Kalaoa or Keopu had a team. It might have been eight. And you know, strangely enough, an awful lot of that group is still in Kona of that age. They sort of stuck for some reason or another. In fact, the only one---no, two of our team are not here. Yamamoto, Yato and Unoji Goto, who's the doctor in Honolulu. Unoji had graduated a year before the rest of us, and his father had asked him if he could stay back to take care of the farm, which he did. And coffee was not something that he was very excited about, he told me. So, after he'd finished his year, he had gotten permission from his father to go, he wanted to take up medicine. But surprisingly, as I said, a lot of these people are still here.

WN: Who ran the league? Who set up the schedules?

SG: Well, there was a Kona Athletic League that was made up of members of each of the athletic associations. There was the association, then there was an athletic association. This booklet that I've given to you, "Kona Young Men's Association," tells of all of their projects and everything, but it has within it an athletic sort of section. Each association had two or three people that were a part of the total Kona athletic association. The county also had recreational committees. There used to be a South Kona and a North Kona recreational committee. Sort of a liaison between the community and the county and would try to lobby at the county level for improvements to parks and this kind of stuff. Under the new charter, there's no such animal. There are no committees of that kind anymore, which is rather unfortunate, because it's left up purely to the administration to make it's decisions, and unfortunately, those are usually based on politics rather than on community need.

The same problem exists now with the hospitals. Each hospital had its own management committee when the hospitals were under the county years ago. There was a direct connection then with the community and its hospital. And if there were any problems, it was done by this committee. Today, where they're under the state and under the Department of Health, there's no liaison, other than one person who is on the state committee. And there's a county committee, but there's no real close connection between the community and the hospitals anymore, as there's no direct connection with the schools and stuff as there used to be when the county took care of school construction and that kind of thing.

The recreation committees of the county though, were not involved in the scheduling of the games of the different community associations. That was a different committee that was made up of district representatives, although the county committee was as a rule made up of political appointments of people that were involved in Kona

recreation association. So, there was sort of a connection with the county, but the association was represented on the county committee, not the other way around. There's a hell of a lot of activity involved in that, and the people involved in it were meeting constantly. I don't know, they may still be. It's just a case of possibly that I've been away from that kind of thing too long.

WN: In those days, what district was considered the power? Was there a consistent winner that would always sweep the awards?

SG: Yeah, I think probably Central's. Possibly they had more esprit de corps you might say. Well, it was a bigger district. It (could) call on more people. Somehow, it always seemed to have a better baseball team. Baseball, too, was the more popular of all the sports. Being played during the day, everybody could go to it. Basketball never had the number of people to it. It happened at night, and most people didn't go out at night. So, baseball probably was the major sport; it created the most interest. And Central's had a bigger area (laughs), so they had more people they could pick on. And too, I guess, probably, Central's, as a community, was a lot better organized. I mean, just from my outside look at it and knowledge of it.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape Nos. 9-76-3-81 and 9-77-3-81

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Sherwood R.H. Greenwell (SG)

March 2, 1981

Captain Cook, Kona, Hawaii

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Sherwood Greenwell. Today is March 2, 1981, and we're at his office at the Kealakekua Ranch Center in Captain Cook, Kona, Hawaii.

In 1938 you came back to Kona from being in school and you took over the ranch?

SG: No, I worked on the ranch. My father was still very active. He ran the ranch, and I was sort of like (a cowboy) at \$50 a month. The highest paid guy got \$65--the head foreman, Gregory Henriques, the person I pointed out in that picture. I did outside work and also I started doing all the billing and rental collections. That's how I got to know the place, and the tenants, and that by going out, and delivering bills, and getting to know them in that respect. I was considered rather difficult. A tenant would come out of the house to pay the rent and have a bag with a chicken head sticking out of one side of it--live chicken--and say, "Please kōkua five dollars."

I would say, "No, no. You chicken hāpai and you pay the total amount."

So, I was not. . . . "Mr. Asa boss, nice man." That's for my father. (Laughs) But I figured if everybody was going to pay their rent, if one person paid his rent all the way through, everybody should pay their rent equally. Dad was a very softhearted sort of a person. If someone had a story, as one poor old lady always had when she came to pay the bill. (Laughs) He would say, "Okay, kōkua." (Laughs) You know.

But by doing this type of (work), I got to know who our tenants were and more or less what their problems and things were. I guess it eventually got me into politics, knowing these people. The farmers that were independent--I think I sort of said it a little while ago--seemed to be more aggressive than those that were Captain Cook tenants. And I mentioned Takashiba. Well, another I think of

is Mori Drug Store on the other side of Manago's, and the Managos, themselves.

The Managos, I guess, somewhere around 1900--somewhere between 1900 and 1905--had been tenants of the ranch. When Harold [Manago] started to work on plans to build a new section below, I felt that it would be best for him to own it. There was no sense in us leasing it constantly to him. It would be a better operation, we felt, if he owned it, rather than leasing it all the time. So, we made them an offer a few years ago which they accepted. Harold said his mother never thought she'd see the day they owned the land. (Laughs) She felt very good about it. She started a restaurant there in 1906 with a hundred dollar loan.

Then, the Gotos were next door. Well, there was a Yamashita Hotel next door and the Gotos, who I've mentioned quite a bit. I don't know how that little community ever got left out of the main lease with Captain Cook. But it was good for the community that there was another business area other than Captain Cook. Goto and Marumoto across here did business with all the individual farmers--independent farmers. I don't know, I think through the years, we have had a sort of more aggressive group around here. Kainaliu, of course, has an aggressive group. I think a lot of this comes from ownership. I think this is probably why we eventually got into (selling).

It'd gotten to where selling land, other than in the development below Manago's--individual lots--our capital gains was getting so damned high. Then most of it just goes into taxes. We don't (retain) enough of it. The same problems that Bishop Estate has. They've been able to get legislation that's allowed them as an eleemosynary institution to sell land and reinvest the money without paying capital gains taxes on them. I think it'd be the best way, probably all over the place, to get large landowners to get rid of their land and allow it to be purchased by the users. Of course, the state doesn't help, through its land use laws, where they withhold the approval of residential land. All it does is to keep residential lands at a minimum which supports an artificial price on the land. If there's a lot of land that was in residential use, the prices would go down. We all have to fight government, unfortunately.

WN: What were the differences between your lease policies and Bishop Estate's policies as far as . . .

SG: I think our policies are quite similar.

WN: The rate, too?

SG: I'm not sure. We used to get together. And they'd call us. I have not discussed leases now for a few years and I don't know what theirs are. They have a minimum amount. On top of it, they have a rental rate for a half-acre piece of a five-acre lot, which the tax office considers as a residential lot. The rest of it, they consider

agricultural. So, they have a basic rental on the half-acre residence, and then a minimum on the balance. If a person works it, then they pay a percentage on the gross--something like 3 or 3-1/2 percent from what I gather. The farmers say this discourages them from going into any agricultural work, because they've got to pay more in rent. Well, hell, it's like a person saying, "I don't want to work" or "I don't want to do anything because if I do, I have to pay taxes." (Laughs) It's ridiculous. Because you're going to make more than what you're going to pay anyway.

Both Bishop Estate and ourselves have got clauses in our leases that enforce a payment of an amount to the lessor in case the lease is sold. I don't know what Bishop Estate's is now. They started with \$5,000 as an amount to gain approval to assign a lease. The way we approached it first was that we wouldn't allow anybody to assign a lease unless they had first built a house, and they had to build a house in five years from the time they get the lease. Both these things are to accomplish one thing, and that is to stop people from just getting a piece of land to speculate on. We feel that the house, if he sells it after the house has been built, there is no speculation, because he's done quite a bit in investing in the land. And if he's got a house on it, someone's going to live on it. We want living people on the land, rather than bare lots that people are just hanging onto, sometimes for years--pure speculation. We're in the land business. We figure that if anyone's going to speculate (chuckles) on our land, it's going to be ourselves.

This did not, it seems, accomplish what we were looking for. We've had people selling our leases the last few years, after putting a house up, for fantastic amounts of money. So, we now have in our leases a clause where they have to pay ten times the amount of the annual rental when they sell. Although not that naive today, Bishop Estate felt that the \$5,000 would stop the person from selling the land. This would make the lot so expensive that nobody would buy it. Well, \$5,000, and the way people have been buying leases here, has been so minimal, it hasn't done a thing to prompt people to hesitate. Now, we've got leases up above. We found one person in a broken down old shack had sold the lease for \$60,000. A 75-year lease, that's almost like purchasing it, you know? That amount of money. That's over \$10,000 an acre.

WN: If someone sells the lease, whatever amount they sell it for, that's their money?

SG: Yeah, yeah. Well, now, we're getting into it, where in the new leases they have to pay us ten times the annual rental. We hope that this will detract from that. It probably wouldn't at the time of a sale, but when a person takes the lease originally, I think it probably would make him think a little bit as to whether he'll accept the lease and be willing to accept that kind of a clause. Because somewhere along the line, if he's not thinking about retaining it forever, this may make him hesitate to sign the lease in the

first place.

I know some criticisms of Bishop Estate's leases and ours by farmers three or four years ago. They were criticized for their rentals-- they were high. But I could never understand it, because those people that I had spoken to always seemed to indicate that our rentals were higher than theirs. I think some of the opposition (was because) nobody likes to pay a percentage rent, whether it's going to be in a store or whether it's going to be. . . . A flat rent that someone knows about seems to be a lot more acceptable than a percentage rent. This may be why there was criticism of Bishop Estate on rentals. We were only criticized for one clause. I don't think it's in this lease. [SG is referring to an old lease.] I think it came later, because these leases were made out at the time P.M.--pre-marijuana. (Chuckles) The new leases, if a person grows any substance which is illegal, it's immediate grounds for a cancellation of lease. This was picked out by these people as being a clause which they found objectionable.

WN: Bishop [Estate] didn't have such a clause?

SG: No, no.

WN: Have you kicked anybody out because of that?

SG: It took a year and a half. And there was an awful lot more involved in it. We found the marijuana. The police went up once, and they found some cocaine in one the drawers. It had, I guess, spilled out of something. They had had an eye on this fellow for some time because they felt he was trafficking in drugs. Then we started proceedings to kick him out. This is about summer of, I guess, '78. And '79, the police found out that this person had shot a doctor up in California. I was approached (and told) that it might be a good idea if I carried a gun, because he had threatened to get rid of me. He called my mother's, spoke to her companion, called the office. Not as himself. He said, "I'm a friend of so-and-so's and I'm going to get Sherwood if you don't take care of this." So, it was suggested that I carry gun after he had killed this guy up in California. We got rid of him. Now I hear he's in some federal penitentiary on the Mainland for something else--drugs in California.

WN: How many acres did he have?

SG: Five acres. But it took a year and a half. Finally, the settlement was made, and we paid him off \$10,000. So, it's not that (chuckles) easy. The tenant in almost any circumstance has the benefit of most laws. No matter what he does. The five-year clause on construction of houses, we've gotten two people out on that. We had to pay them off the rental and stuff they had paid--back rentals. At least it gives us the land to lease to somebody else so they can do something with it. It goes back to the same damn thing about people sitting

on land and hoping (to speculate). What these people were trying to do was, they were hoping maybe they could get away with this and then sell the lease. They were Mainland people. We try to give land to a person that we feel will be a good farmer and use it. But unfortunately, you don't always win there. You know, you don't arrive at that kind of an ending. Too, you can only somewhat--I hate to use the word "screen," but I guess it's the only one I can think of that's not too offensive--a tenant. But you can't where he is assigning his lease to somebody else. You either say yes or no, and there're really very few grounds that you can say no on. If we knew he was a known person involved in something, then we could say no. But unfortunately, you've got to be awfully careful and have to go consult your attorney first to see (chuckles) if the guy is not going to throw something at you. Most of our tenants, though, are local people.

And the subdivision down below Manago's, I hope that most of those will be local people. Originally, it was the idea to have it cheap enough so that it could be afforded by local people, but, unfortunately, today's costs are going up so damn much that I don't know whether they're going to be able to buy. Unfortunately, our problem is, we can't give them terms, because we need the cash ourselves.

As I say, in the cattle business, with us going into the shopping center and subdivisions and everything, a lot of this is being done so we can afford the luxury of ranching. Ranching was very profitable at times years ago, but it's gone through quite a number of years where. . . . In fact, it's no different, really, than most agriculture. Agriculture, everywhere here and on the Mainland, salaries and benefits have all gone up. Product price hasn't gone up as much. Now, people say, "Well, meat prices are very high." Well, prices that meat commands in the market really has very little influence on what we get. A certain amount of that goes to the slaughterer. Most of the cost of the product goes to the market for packaging materials, the labor of packaging, and all of that. That's where an awful lot of that money goes.

For us to get the (top) price in Honolulu today of \$1.18, that's (U.S.) Prime, we've got to keep 'em in the feedlot for four months or so. And the feed costs are going up. Our net is getting less. Our net is less now than it was about 1952 when the meat price was up to 50 cents a pound in Honolulu. The animals came right off the grass, went downtown. We had 600-pound carcasses in those days. They were a lot heavier than they are today, because we didn't have as many cattle. The herds were smaller because we didn't have water and other stuff to give them all the time to keep more cattle on the ranch. We'd get 300 bucks.

I'll grant you today, on our cattle here, we're getting \$500 plus for steers, grass-fed. This is good money. But we're spending \$500 a month buying water from the county in this dry weather. We're paying about that much in electric pump to pump that water

up. The diesel that we use in our four pumps above pumping the water up prior to 1977, I think it was, was 18-1/2 to 19-1/2 cents a gallon. We're paying 84 or 86 cents a gallon for diesel today. Those pumps when they're running are using half a gallon of diesel an hour.

Our taxes have gone up. Our highest paid employee--I'm not quite sure right now--gets probably about, I guess, (\$1,000) a month. In fact, they're all almost, because they've all been with us so long, (getting near this amount). Plus that, they get retirement, life insurance and meat. Figure meat is the cheapest thing we can give anybody. They get about 30 pounds a month. Plus the HMSA [Hawaii Medical Service Association]. That has been going up. Including (the extras with) the base pay, (salaries are about \$1,400). God, when we first started with HMSA, it was something like \$35 for a family, and today, with the dental and glasses, I think it's around (141) bucks a month. We were, I guess, the first ranch that started a ranch medical (plan). At first, we paid the doctors directly. With the dentist, we set the limit of a hundred dollars a year, which I grant you wasn't a hell of a lot, but dentists didn't charge as much then, either.

WN: Is this in '38? Is that when you're talking about?

SG: No. I think probably during the war. Because when HMSA started we didn't have a qualifying number (of employees), but we were able to get Plan 4 because we had started our own, and we were one of the first ranches (to join). I guess we were sort of accepted as being good advertising. You know, they say, "Kealakekua's Arthur Greenwell's got HMSA" or something. And once you've got your foot into one ranch, I guess they figured the (chuckles) other ranches would come in. And we've paid it all ourselves. We've never shared the cost, because we'd taken care of the whole thing earlier.

Glasses, we made a trade-off there. Some people would change their glasses every year and get two sets of frames and everything. So, everybody takes care of their own glasses, and we'll knock off a half a day Saturday. That was the beginning (chuckles) of a five-day week. We used to work six days when I first came back. I tried to get down to an eight-hour day. You see, the thing was that we travelled so much. It took from here up to our work, even if it was right above the coffee [lands], it took us--where today, it takes five, seven minutes to get up there--it took us half an hour, 45 minutes to ride from the house all the way up this way and up to that point. Up to where most of our cattle work is, it would an hour and a half to get up there. Working up at Papaloa, it would take 2 hours, 2 hours and a half. So, an awful lot of time was spent in travel.

WN: Going up how?

SG: Horseback. There was a time when this ranch didn't have a car.

The only car in the family was one we had in Honolulu, until 1937 when my mother got a station wagon that was here in Kona. That was the first ranch car--ranch vehicle. We had no trucks; we had nothing. Then, we, in '47, put a road up the mountain. [Nineteen] forty-six, I bought the first ranch jeep in the state. And it was a new one, it wasn't surplus. It was the second civilian jeep on this island. We still have it. (Chuckles) Lois and I had our honeymoon in it, and it's got a lot of sentiment attached to it. (Laughs) Then, we got another jeep in July of that year. We've gotten quite automated now. All of our fence lines have roads alongside of them. So, all of that type of work now is done by car rather than by horse. I grant you, we've got to keep a car up. We don't have a hayburner. But we can do so much more today by going by car rather than by horse.

WN: You said it's faster, but what are some other benefits? In what other ways was it easier to have a car rather than a horse?

SG: One thing, we don't lose as many tools. When (a man) had to bring tools back, a big, heavy crowbar over his shoulder, he'd leave it there until maybe next time, when we're going to work up here, we'll pick it up. (Chuckles) Well, sometimes, it would fall down in the grass. I mean, a 15-pound crowbar or even a 20-pound big one, is not something that normally you have to buy very often. But we used to have to buy a new one every two, three years just because nobody could remember where it was put the last time.

We had a ranch telephone system that my brother put in 1934 that connected all the ranch places. It was a good system, I guess the best ranch system. Only one other place had a telephone at that time, that was Roy Wall's. And my brother's helper on that was Takashiba. He worked with my brother on the telephone line.

WN: What's the importance of having a telephone system on a ranch?

SG: Communications. I grant you, the more communications you have--it's like this radio today--probably the less planning you do, because you can make decisions at the last moment on doing something. I guess another important thing, probably from an individual's point of view, is help in case of an accident or something. When old Kawano got kicked in the arm up at Papaloa, he was able to get to the telephone and call down. We were able to go up, get him in the jeep, bring him down. Without the telephone, a guy of 83, you don't know what would have happened. He couldn't saddle his horse because he was trying to get his horse at the time it kicked him. He could die of shock on the way down the hill.

WN: Did other ranches have that system in '34?

SG: Only one other place I know of, Roy Wall's--Tommy White's at that time. My brother was hot on anything electronic. He would have loved today. He was making his own radios at 11 years old, doing

his circuits, and putting in his tubes and things. And he went to MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology], so it showed that he did have capabilities. The radio does the same thing, except today where time is more important or, let's say, if a pipeline breaks, the cost of getting that water up is quite a bit. Today, if something like that is found, they can call down, tell us immediately what's wrong. Someone can go up with the tools necessary to fix the problem. With our flowers we use it constantly in sending orders up to them, so they can get the flowers down for someone that afternoon. Sometimes, some of those orders, if we couldn't get them that day, we wouldn't get them at all.

Injury and that kind of thing, still there's no way to get people to help faster than by having a good communication system. One of our neighbor's men, coming across from McCandless side a few months ago, went over a stone and busted the steering gear in the car. He was a guy that has a heart problem. He walked across and came down (our side). He probably walked 12, 13 miles. Jill Olsen, who lives up the road, said this fellow came and knocked at the door, and sort of hung on the railing, and asked to have someone come and pick him up. She said he looked as though he was going to collapse anytime. Well, in a situation like that with us, the person would have called, and we'd have been right up there. Fortunately, nothing happened to the guy, but it was quite a test to put someone through who had a problem. The amount of money it costs to put in a system is little compared to having something drastic happen to a person.

We put a [water] pumping system in in 1961. We used to pump before the county water system went in, from down there [Napoopoo] all the way up to 6400 feet. In fact, we used to sell water down here at the road. Manago used to buy water from us. They weren't able to use it in anything other than toilets, as we did at the house, because it wasn't potable water. You don't have to drink the water in the toilets, (chuckles) so it doesn't have to be pure. We sold it only to our tenants so that we wouldn't be considered in the water business, a utility.

The cars have changed everything, as far as the ranch goes, though. Where, before, two people used to go out to check fences and stuff, today, one person can go because he's got enough capability in carrying tools and stuff to do it himself. So, in a way, it's helped us with labor. In 1938 we had people getting a dollar a day. I guess, today, they're getting more than that a day--\$30 a day and more. And then, they worked, as I say, a six-day week. Then, we went to, as I said, five and a half days. That half a day almost got to. . . . With the time it took to go up above, we could only use that day to do something down below. And so, there were times when it was just a wasted day. So, eventually, we got away from that half day and went to a five-day week.

WN: How did a typical workday in 1938 compare with, say, a typical

workday today on the ranch? I know that's a general question, but. . . .

SG: Well, we had more men working for us then. We had men staying at Pauahi. That's about eight miles up. And we had two men staying at Papaloa, which is ten miles up. More, because of the time it took. During the winter, dry weather, these men had to water cattle that would come in for water. You would give them just so much water. Soon as they lifted their heads from their first drink, you immediately drove them out, because when they stuck their heads down for the second drink, they would take almost twice as much water. There just wasn't the water that we could afford these cattle. So, these men above there did that (during the winter). That was one of their main jobs.

They also went into the forest, and cut ferns, and cleared land, and planted grass seed. They checked the fences within their areas. Pauahi, before the war, we had two cowboys and two weedmen. The cowboys did the watering of the cattle; they checked fences. The weedmen would go out. . . . They were pretty old men, in fact. I guess they were in their, probably, 70s. They must have been. Even as young as I was, they looked very old. (Laughs) The lower men would go up, clear guava in the paddocks just above the coffee. When '38. . . . I guess we were beginning to use 2-4D then. No, that came after the war.

WN: Two-4D? What's that?

SG: Herbicide. Two-4D, 2-4-5T. Whether they call it "Agent Orange," all, it's same sort of thing. But a boon to the rancher. The time that we used to have to go and pull weeds up was terribly time-consuming, even with low wages and everything, but this was the only way to get rid of certain weeds. The poisons that were being used at that time on the coffee were generally arsenic. You couldn't put arsenic out in the cattle field because of two reasons. It kills 'em, and the other reason is that it tastes good. They like the taste of arsenic--cattle do. So, you couldn't poison. There was nothing to poison with. There weren't the herbicides at that time.

Of course, if we went up to work on the fence, it took four of us from down here anywhere from an hour to two hours to get to where we were going to go. We started work at about 6:30 or 7 [o'clock a.m.]. Of course, one thing you got to realize, too. Six-thirty then is what is 7 o'clock now. It used to be 2-1/2 hour difference between here and the Mainland in time. Then, during the war, we went onto what was called war time, and they knocked off a half an hour to make it 2 hours between the Mainland and here. And then, during the summer during the war, we went onto daylight savings time, which was an hour earlier--getting up an hour earlier. We'd leave, as I say, about 6:30, which is today, 7 o'clock. We'd be back 4, 4:30 [o'clock p.m.], which is about a 9-hour day, 8-1/2 or

9-hour day. At that time, we were working on Saturdays, too. I know, Saturdays, the half-day Saturdays. I'll never forget one day. We were working on a fence at the top of the coffee. As I said, we used to ride all the time, horseback. I couldn't wait till it got to be 11 o'clock to come down because I had a heavy weekend. (Laughs) I was getting a lot of heavier weekends. That may be one of the reasons why we started to knock off (laughs) on Saturdays.

Dad was damn good with the men, though. I think we've always tried to be. If they did what we'd considered overtime, we'd give time off. Of course, we've kept up then with the other things--medical and probably around '40 is when we started getting into time off for sick leave and this kind of stuff. I got into it probably more because of my association with Kona Light and Power [Company]. About 1944 or so, I became a director of Kona Light and Power, and was on their negotiating committee. I guess I began to realize more of the things that went on with employment, which was quite different. You don't learn staying within your own little baliwick so much as you do when you get out into something (different). I guess there were some things that I felt--the negotiations of the union--were quite logical (chuckles) demands. And I applied some of those things to the ranch.

WN: And you said earlier that ranching isn't as profitable as before because of the rising costs of different things?

SG: Yeah. And see, the price of beef in Honolulu has only come up within about the last three years. Before that, we were getting something like 60 cents a pound for beef that was in the feedlot. Half the price of that animal---no, at that time, three-quarters of the price of that animal went to paying for the feed. Now, the price has come up and only about 50 percent of that amount we get is going to feed. So, we are better off because we've got a higher price. We've had very good weather this last year. We've kept all of our cattle on the ranch. These cattle will go to market without feed. This'll be better, a lot better for us. One of the things, eight, nine years ago, we didn't have a market here in Kona for our cattle. If we wanted to ship them out grass-fed, we'd have to send them to Hilo, and they weren't that keen on that many grass-fed cattle. I don't know what the market does here. Kona Meat Market, how it gets rid of all this grass-fed beef that it gets, but it gets rid of it and at a good price.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Is grass-fed beef not as good as grain-fed?

SG: The problem with grass-fed beef is that it is inconsistent in its texture. The market before, years ago, Honolulu market, was all grass-fed. The cattle came from our lower pastures; they came from our upper pastures. They came from the wide areas of Parker Ranch. They came from Molokai where it's hot and dry. Each animal that went in is a little distinctive in itself, but where you had, then, these wide variations of climate that cattle came from, this varied again the tenderness of that (animal). It took, at that time, about four years to get an animal up to what we considered slaughter weight, around 600 pounds. If you figure four years, lack of water, where water was rationed to them, where they could only get so much, every year these animals lost weight during dry weather. Every time an animal loses weight, the fat that had developed during the good period goes into gristle. It deteriorates into gristle. So, your older animals have accumulated more gristle as a result of deterioration of fat during these lean (dry) periods. After Mainland beef started to come into Honolulu market, grass-fed cattle were very slow to sell, because no one knew whether this piece of meat that they were buying was going to be like a brick or whether it's going to be a nice, tender piece.

All kinds of things were done in the slaughterhouses to try to get away from this. Hilo used the Swift process where they injected the animal with papayn. No, Honolulu did. Hilo. . . . Yeah, Hilo did the same thing. Then, the animal, after slaughter, was put into a holding room at a temperature of about 60 degrees for a 24-hour period. The whole ceiling of this room was equipped with steri-lamps, ultraviolet lamps which killed the bacteria. But the internal bacteria of the animal helped to break down the tissues to tenderize the beef. Honolulu tried the same thing. These were costs on the slaughter side. The slaughter operations were all, in most instances, owned by the ranches, so it just added cost onto the sale of that meat. We owned the animal right up to the time one of the markets bought the (carcass).

Hawaii Meat Company tried to create a grade. And when you think of grade, you think of quality. But it really didn't do a damn thing to quality. What they did with cattle, they picked carcasses with a certain fat cover, and those they gave a house brand--Maile brand--for Hawaii Meat Company. So, theoretically, this was the best grade of cattle that came out of Hawaii Meat Company. But if it had come from someplace where it'd gone through a number of drought periods, it could have a lot of fat on the outside, but it could be tough in itself. So, this type of house mark didn't (assure quality).

When Mainland meat started to come in in quantity, the meat that they sent down here was U.S. Choice, which is, on the Mainland, not as popular as U.S. Good, because there's a better price differential on the Mainland. It was sent down here because they had to get rid of it. Island people got used to U.S. Choice. Some people said, "Well, you know, if we're just home ourselves, we'll buy island

meat, but if we're having company, we'd buy U.S. Choice." (Chuckles) Because they knew that it was going to be nice and tender. So, tenderness became very important. For us to be able to sell our island meat and to satisfy the customer, we had to go into pen feeding. So, Hawaii Meat Company in Honolulu then developed a feedlot at West Loch, by Pearl Harbor. And they've been in the business ever since. I was then a director of Hawaii Meat Company. I quit.

WN: But the beef that you raise here on your ranch is still grass-fed?

SG: Right. But I think the reason today why grass-fed cattle are selling better, the tenderness is a little more consistent. Where before they had to be rationed water, today they can drink all the water they want during the dry season. So, this keeps up their body fluids, too. We also, like right now, are feeding them molasses, which is giving them some extra protein. That helps to keep up the quality. The other thing, I think, that's helping a great deal is all the talk of cholesterol. Marbly meat only means more cholesterol. It means more heart trouble and all that. Probably, also, it can be said, this is organically grown. (Laughs) And that is appealing to some people.

And of course, there are a hell of a lot more people in the state today than there were. The number of people that are interested in grass-fed for those reasons I've just given, there were few of them percentage-wise, few of them actually before. Because even though they may be the same percentage, there'd be a smaller number because the whole population was smaller. Just mere numbers is creating a market for our meat. And it's going a lot better than it did in the last. . . . When did Hawaii Meat Company go in the feedlot business? Probably almost 30 years ago. And the last two or three years is when grass-fed cattle have been moving as well as they did before that time. So, this has been good for us.

WN: Have beef prices been fluctuating all throughout the years . . .

SG: Yeah.

WN: . . . or is it pretty consistent?

SG: No. It goes up and down.

WN: So, what were some of the good times and some of the bad times since you've been here?

SG: Well, when I first came back, it was good.

WN: Nineteen thirty-eight?

SG: Yeah. We were getting about 35 cents a pound for grass-fed beef.

Our highest salary was less than 10 times what our present salary is, or 12 times. Our whole operational costs are higher. We shipped only about 600 head a year. Today, we ship almost 800 a year. That's something to take some of the slack out--just more cattle. Our price was good during the war. It went down after the war. And the '50s, it went up again. We sort of smile--like the coffee farmer smiles when he hears about the frost down in Brazil--when there's a heavy snow in Montana. (Laughs) Or when they have foot-and-mouth disease in (Argentina). I mean, we'll smile for the same reasons. Because oversupply causes fluctuations. Grain prices now are getting high. The cattle prices unfortunately follow grain prices when they go up. They're slow to come down but very fast to go up. So, Honolulu will tell us that the grain price has gone up, so we get a notice on this. We have no control over the price of our product in the market. A market price is determined by the Mainland landed cost of carcasses in Honolulu. We have no say as to what (our meat) will sell for. Within last two years, I'd say, we were beginning to make money again.

WN: You said grain prices are going up now. Since yours is grass-fed . . .

SG: We do have a product. We buy something, though, that's tied directly on the grain price. Molasses is tied to the price of barley. I've forgotten what molasses is worth in energy compared to barley, but it's something like 75 percent of the value of barley. So, it's price is tied to, let's say, 75 percent of barley price. I guess we've been buying now about 40 tons of molasses a month. We get it in a tanker that holds 29 tons. If we didn't do that, though, our cattle wouldn't be coming along during this type of weather. If we left them without that added supplement, their weight would go down, and it would take them some time to improve once the weather got better. By keeping them in condition, once the weather gets better, they're going to surge ahead. So, we'll be able to get them off the ranch a little faster.

WN: How do you feed them molasses?

SG: In tanks, bathtubs, we use. We have pipes bolted across the tops of the tub so they won't fall in. They'll play around, and then one will get hooked in, and end up with its legs up in the air with its tongue and its head hanging out on one side, deader than a doornail. They're rather difficult to get (chuckles) out. But that's the most simple feed for us to feed. We mix that with urea, sulfur, monosodium phosphate, trace minerals, and epsom salts. Magnesium (sulfate), epsom salts makes them utilize the carbohydrate of the molasses. Urea, in the cow's stomach, turns the carbohydrate into protein in the animal. We started molasses, I guess, in November last year, as soon as it started getting dry. We've been feeding molasses off and on now for, oh, I guess, almost 20 years.

WN: Prior to that, what?

SG: Couldn't get it up. See, this all came after we got a better road in. Well, in '51, we got our first cattle truck. Before that, we had a cattle truck, but it was a 1935 secondhand truck. We use that [1951] truck today for hauling molasses. Some of (this equipment) lasts an awful long time. We have a tractor that we got in '43 (chuckles) that still goes.

WN: After cattle have grazed on a piece of land, and you move them to another piece, how long does it take to replace that pasture?

SG: Of course, it depends upon rainfall. If it's during the summer and we've got good rainfall, the grass gets back to where you could pasture it again in probably two months. But with us in our rotation grazing, they don't get back for about 4-1/2 to 5-1/2 months. Because the grass is growing very quickly, there's a lot of grass. The animals stay in the pasture they're in for maybe 2, 2-1/2 months. Then they'll go into the next paddock for the same length of time. Then they'll go into the next, that'll be five months. But there's no other better way to rotate them. You can't push 'em through. The only other way would be to have more cattle so they make the rotation faster. But what are you going to do with those extra cattle during dry weather? During dry weather, they stay in one paddock only a month and a half. Because the feed goes very quickly, and then they have to move in the next one. So, they're back to the original pasture in three months. If it gets real bad, then we start giving the cows molasses or we get rid of young animals that are growing, let's say, of a size of 700 pounds or so. We can send those to the feedlot, and let the cows go into those pastures and use that feed. This last year has been one of the best years we've had for years weather-wise. It just can't be beat. And it's reflected in the condition of our cattle. I haven't seen them . . .

WN: What is ideal weather?

SG: Well, our rain started early last year during our dry weather last winter, and they continued all the way through. All the way up until November. See, usually, dry weather starts around September. And last year, we had good rains, as I've said. We had some good rains in January, and they've lasted all the way through. We didn't have the cold. I was up the mountain yesterday. I checked the thermometer at 5,000 feet, and the coldest since last Wednesday was 36 [degrees Fahrenheit]. The coldest up until last Wednesday from a week before was 36. Well, if you get [below] 36, the frost's killing the grass. About a month ago, the grass looked pretty good. It looked as though we were getting some new growth. All of that growth has been killed. When we get to the middle of this month, we will have passed our coldest period. It still could get down into the 20s, which normally it does every year. But with the weather that we had last year, we've got an awful lot more feed on the ground than we have had previously in the last 20 years.

WN: Do you fertilize the ground at all?

SG: We fertilized down here a few years ago. We fertilized one of our big pastures and planted legume seeds in it, and our rotation pastures at the top of the coffee, we fertilized twice. All the time by air. Last year, we sowed seed up on the mountain by air. We've done that three times. Well, in an hour you do as much in an airplane as we did it two years ago. My son said, "Oh, let's go and do it ourselves."

I said, "It's a lot better by air."

Poor old Murrayair was having more trouble with people crashing their planes and everything, they just couldn't get to us. It was getting late. It was August, and we should get the seed in really by May at the latest. We couldn't. It took us about two months to get it out on horseback by hand. So, flying it out is the only way. After we had fertilized this one pasture--that's 4,000 feet up to about 4,500 feet--we started on an airport. We've got it almost complete. We haven't worked on it, I guess, for six or eight years. We started about 12 years ago, and we've got it fairly well completed. The reason that was done was that up at that elevation, I figured it'd be cheaper to bring the fertilizer up by truck than to fly it all the way from Kailua. Now, of course, the field [i.e., Keahole Airport] is another eight miles beyond. So, it makes it further for the plane to come.

But our last fertilizing was done about four years ago. This tenant that we kicked out, I think, was afraid that the helicopter was doing something other than carrying fertilizer up the hill. He came out with a shotgun and was going to shoot it down. (Chuckles) He lived right next door to where the helicopter was taking off from. This was at a time when there was quite a jump in fertilizer prices. We had gotten a quote on it. They called and said they couldn't keep that quote and if we didn't take it in two weeks, the price was going to go up something like \$40 a ton. Well, that got it up into over \$200 a ton. Our price was, I think, \$192 or something. We haven't fertilized since. It's just getting too damned expensive.

WN: What about down in the ma kai areas where there isn't as much rainfall? How do they cope with that problem of replenishing the grass?

SG: Well, of course, you have a different variety of grass. I wanted to get a book on grasses some years ago. University of Hawaii--Eddie Hosaka is probably the best tropical agronomist in the world. I doubt very much whether there's anybody who even comes up today to what he was. But you can get a Mainland book, the Mainland book's for temperate (climates). Stuff you got from Eddie was tropical. But you couldn't get a book that carried everything. Finally, my mother in London got a book on the grasses of South Africa. And that covered our situation here, because South Africa

has high table areas, too. Here, the lower part of the ranch grows tropical and subtropical grasses that won't grow four miles up the hill. And up there, there are grasses that won't grow down here. So, to cope with the environment, you have different grasses at different levels. We have one grass that grows practically everywhere, but during the winter up above, one good frost kills it right down to the roots---down to the ground level. Not the roots, but the ground level. So, to supply feed at the different levels, we have to have different types of foliage, grasses, different legumes. Legumes we've been getting in over the years, because we were pretty well grassed. But we're trying now to get the legumes in. We've been doing this for, oh, I guess 15 years. Different varieties of legumes. And water has helped us. Being able to . . .

WN: For example, like Kahuku Ranch, seems like it's all brown over there.

SG: Yeah. I'm rather surprised. I thought they were having fairly good weather. Of course, with that wind down there, the place dries up in no time. Combination of no rain for a few days and wind. It just whips the moisture right out of the grass.

WN: How often would you transport cattle to Honolulu?

SG: Last year, we sent only 150 head to Honolulu for the feedlot--two pens in Honolulu. They go in lots of 75. We bring them down the hill, and then transfer them onto a semitruck trailer that (hauls) them to Kawaihae, where then they're put onto other trailers that are ecologically sound. They retain all the crap and stuff within the trailer so it won't spill out in the ocean and contaminate the ocean. (Chuckles)

WN: So, 1938, how was that transporting done? Can you describe it?

SG: Nineteen thirty-eight, we used to ship a whole shipload.

WN: How many?

SG: Hundred and twenty head. We'd get them together up on the ranch. Some would come from up there, and some would come from our lower pastures. They'd be brought down this road over here, and we'd drive them along the road.

WN: How many of you . . .

SG: Well, there would be our men, and we'd get some other extras from outside, plus some men from my cousin's ranch. So, all together, there may be maybe 14 or 15, 16 of us. They'd be about four or five men out in the lead, and about every 20 head, there would be another man or so. The road itself was all right coming down, because it's fenced on both sides. Down here, there'd always have to be someone standing at an entrance going into someone else's

place. You always had extra men in front and behind in case they got scared and they stampeded.

We only once had a real problem like that. That, I think, was in 1940. We'd gotten the cattle together up on the (ranch). We usually brought them down on a Saturday. The reason being that there were less people on the road at the time we came through, particularly school kids. See, everybody in those days used to walk to school. Nobody got a ride to school unless they lived five miles away from the school. So, this could be a problem--kids on the road. This one time, we got the cattle down to just about the second gate before we got into the coffee. We were in the midst of a thunderstorm. Lightning struck an 'ōhi'a tree right near by, about a hundred yards away that the telephone line was on. The result was a tremendous explosion. Everything stopped. And then, cattle and horses all started (chuckles) to take off. We were able to surround the cattle again and held them, but they were so disturbed from this lightning crash that my father felt that it was best not to bring them down, to wait until the next day. We had in the bunch a big steer that had come off the mountain that was a little wild, himself. Tremendous big horned steer. The next day we went up, gathered the cattle together. They were still quite edgy. As we came down through the coffee, this one steer took off. We finally were able to get him back into the herd. Our other cattle were pushing constantly all the way down the hill. We couldn't hold them the way we usually did. We just had to trot the whole way with them. We got them to the gate that we usually go down through and got them down through there. That's when the steer went off (over the walls and away). The next day he was dead. He had gotten so overheated (on the way down).

See, normally, they'd come down on Saturday; they'd rest Sunday; and they go down on Monday. Well, this day, they didn't have that full day's rest down there. Then, we'd pick them up Monday, take them across to the Kaawaloa Road and down to the beach, where they'd spend the night. And the next morning, we'd ship them on the Humuula off a chute that was built in 1931, which was a copy of a similar type cattle-loading chute that Kaalualu had. Kaalualu is a name of a place beyond South Point. Sort of directly to the ocean from Waiohinu. And Kaalualu was the name of the ranch that Hutchinson Sugar [Company] had. Eventually it was consolidated into Hawaiian Ranch Company which ran that ranch and Kapapala. Now they've gotten out of the ranching business entirely.

Usually, at night, some of the guys would play cards. Some of us would go out fishing right off the pier where Cook's monument is. The ship came in usually about half past 7 or 8 [o'clock a.m.]. By about 10 o'clock or so, we'd be through shipping and we'd come up the hill. By that time, we were hot, covered with dust from the cattle pen--very dry down there--and were just pooped. Oh, come home. My dad would fix a hot, big bowl of tea, and a glass of

water with gin. (Laughs) And we all would have a beer. Our men would stop at the house, and everybody'd have a beer before they went home. By god, it was hot.

WN: What day would the boat come?

SG: Tuesdays, I think it was.

WN: So, actually, from Saturday to Tuesday, you're down there?

SG: (No, from Monday afternoon.) The first shipping that I ever remember was probably around 1929. I would have been ten years old. At that time, we were still shipping cattle at Napoopoo, pulling them into the water. I'll try and get some pictures of Napoopoo shipping. The men from my cousin's place came over, and we'd meet at the pen, which we called the shipping pen. Not the pen we later kept cattle in. It was just overnight. This overnight one was a paddock of about two acres in size. The cattle would be brought down the day before and they'd be (held) there.

Then, the next morning, as I recall, we awakened about 2 [o'clock] in the morning. Horses were (saddled), and we went down to get the cattle. I think the thing I remember the most about it was going down the hill off where the old horse road separates from the present road and seeing the morning star and (full) moon--everything was scheduled to go when the moon was the fullest. And that star up in the sky. I'll never forget this morning star as we went down the hill into Napoopoo. The cattle were held where the lei sellers are now. You know where the little kiosks are down in front of the heiau? They were held there, and then in groups of, I guess, about 12. Six on each side of the boat, I'm not quite sure. There may have been 12 or 14 to a boat. Then, that group would be taken and put into the pen right off the sand. Then, they were roped and pulled across the sand and into the ocean.

We got a picture somewhere. Here. It's a picture you have, I think. This one. Oh, yes, here. See, this fellow has got a steer on the end of his rope. Cattle, when they hit the water, would start jumping. They try to jump over the water for some reason. Then, they're pulled out and tied on the side of this whaleboat. This is the Hawaii. Humuula came later. This is a Matson freighter in Napoopoo Bay. A Matson freighter would come in and unload lumber. People in the community would (be hired to) go out and swim the lumber ashore. Then, they'd stack it on the shore, and later, take it across to. . . . Do you know where the little county park is down by the heiau? There's a little pavilion? That used to be American Factors' lumberyard. The lumber, then, was stacked there. Our house has lumber that came from there. (On) the old, unplanned lumber, you can still see the Napoopoo sand caught on the rough sides (of the planks).

WN: Those would be one by one? One cattle at a time goes swimming out?

SG: Yeah, yeah. There were two horses that were used--two types of horses. One was the front horse, and the other was a tail horse. A tail horse wasn't as big a horse as the front horse. The front horse had to be the biggest. He got into the deep water before the animal. The tail horse, the guy behind would grab the tail up and twist it around the pommel, and a stubborn animal would be pulled sideways into the ocean. There would be probably about six men that would be pulling animals into the water. One or two men in the pen would rope the cattle so that when one of the front horses would come in, he'd give the rope to the front man and off he'd go down the beach.

The way that beach is today, I don't think you could ship cattle there. Too rocky. I mentioned this to my father. That rockiness started after the earthquake. Somewhere around '48 there was an earthquake. There were some landslides that took this rock into the ocean. Hurricane Nina brought the rock along the beach. That rock replaced the sand that was there. I guess that sand has gone so far out in the ocean that it can't be somehow brought back in by the currents or there's still more of this rock that's sitting there, just waiting to be brought in by the tides and by rough seas. He, in probably '50 when I mentioned this to him, said he never recalled a time when the beach was too rocky to where they couldn't ship.

WN: Is that the reason why they stopped doing that?

SG: No, it's just hard work. It's hard on horses. Special horses. Almost some special men. It's just a case of looking for a more--if I use the word "humane" someone will find reasons why I'm not humane in other ways (chuckles), so you can't. . . . Easier on everything--the cattle, the horses, and the men. This is why we brand today in calf tables. There's not the fun of roping (the calves) or knocking them down on foot. But it's a lot easier on the calves. When you get people involved in anything like that, you create competitiveness. When people get overly competitive, they get overly rough. The animal suffers as a result. The method that we used at Kaawaloa, which is in those negatives you got today, was probably the easiest way with the setup that we had, where we did not have a pier here in Kona that the cattle could be run right off of right onto the boat. It was probably the best way of combining the best of two things--a chute, and still having to tie them on the side of the boat.

WN: How many head of cattle would you tie onto one whaleboat?

SG: As I said earlier, I'm not sure whether they'd be 12 or possibly 14 might be tied up.

WN: Then the whaleboat would go out to the main boat? Then, how would you get it [cattle] from the whaleboat onto the . . .

SG: They put slings around the animals and lifted them up. I think one of these pictures probably shows the animal suspended in air from the cables down from the donkey engines on the boat. The animal would be swung up this way, (SG makes swooshing sound) and put down on the boat, where he would be tied by his horns all the way to Honolulu. He would not be released until it was time to load the railcars in Honolulu with the cattle. The cattle would run off the boat into these railroad cars that would drop the cattle at the slaughterhouse on. . . .

WN: Middle Street?

SG: Middle Street, yeah. Today, the animals go to Kawaihae, run right onto the barge. This had started earlier when they put the pier up at Kawaihae, oh, I guess, just. . . . I'm not sure if it was just before or just after the war. Just beyond Kawaihae there was a jetty, and the boat tied up to it. They had a big, long gangplank that went onto the boat. They drove the cattle onto the pier, down the pier, and then onto the boat. During the war, we had to give up Kaawaloa. That extra time that the Humuula had to be at sea was considered dangerous, so Kona cattle all went out of Kailua, pulled into water the same way. So, we kind of back(tracked) . . .

WN: During the war?

SG: Yeah. They might have gone to Kawaihae, but our roads, of course, were then so damn lousy. You'd have to take that upper road. We had to go there eventually, because there was a period when the barge couldn't load cattle in Kailua because we didn't have pens. We eventually got pens on the new pier, which worked out beautifully for us. That was a hassle with the legislature. Some people, either because they didn't like ranches or they felt that this was going to be a dirty use of the pier, didn't want it down there. As far as the use was concerned, it almost was an attraction for tourists. Every time we shipped, there were tourists all over the place watching this (operation). You know, when anyone goes anywhere, the industry that's there is always of interest. It did attract quite a number of people. I thought the best thing we should have done was to have a steak house on top of the pens. (Laughs)

WN: In 1929, when you said you can remember, that was when you were going down to Napoopoo?

SG: Yes. And that ended in '31, where we then started shipping from Kaawaloa. There were only two ranches that shipped out of Kaawaloa. Kealakekua Ranch, then Arthur L. Greenwell Ranch and W.H. Greenwell Ranch.

WN: The rest shipped . . .

SG: McCandless, I think, at that time, still shipped at Napoopoo. McCandless, later, then started to go into selling smaller cattle,

and they were then trucked. Most of those were bought by Kahua. Frank Greenwell, Gomes, Huehue Ranch, and Puuwaawaa all shipped at Kailua. Puuwaawaa, earlier, before the roads had been improved, used to ship at Kiholo, because that was directly below the ranch. They shipped off the beach the same way that we used to ship at Napoopoo. Parker Ranch used to ship from the (beach) until they got their pier. Then, the causeway between the land and the pier during a storm got washed out and they had to go back to pulling cattle into the water again--which I didn't appreciate having to go back into, because our men had never done it before. They got pretty good at it.

But the shipping at Kailua during the war was quite a different the thing. We never got into where we were shipping the 120 head at a time. A shipment would be made up of a number of ranches combining their cattle together and shipping them down, because of the transportation from the ranches down to Kailua. And there just weren't enough trucks in Kona that everybody could haul all at one time. You know, one ranch couldn't haul all of theirs at one time. Puuwaawaa had two trucks. They had probably the biggest truck in Kona. We had their old truck.

WN: This is after the war that you're talking about?

SG: During the war.

WN: You had a truck already?

END OF SIDE TWO

SIDE ONE; TAPE NO. 9-77-3-81

WN: You were saying that when you were shipping at Napoopoo, you would drive the herd down. When you were shipping down at Kaawaloa, you would drive it down. But then, when they stopped Kaawaloa, you had to go to Kailua to ship your cattle. At that time, you didn't have to drive them down?

SG: We had to truck them. We'd drive them down ma kai here. Then, we'd put them on the trucks. We didn't get a chute above until after the war. We drove them down (through the coffee). Our problem is that our ranch doesn't have frontage to the main road, because of all the coffee in between. All the other ranches come right (to the road). One reason is, our ranch is probably the narrowest of the bigger ranches along the roadside. (SG refers to map.) Well, these are two lands, really. This is Kealakekua, and the boundary between Kealakekua and Kaawaloa comes down like this. So, at the road about here, we're quite narrow. We're only about that wide. See, this is Kaawaloa on this side and this is us. These are the lands of Kaawaloa and Kealakekua. Two lands in

here. And the ranch is Kealakekua. So, we're quite narrow right down here. All of this is built up.

WN: So, it was about during the war, then, when you got all those vehicles to truck to Kailua?

SG: We had one truck, this old truck, and we rented one from a fellow down the road.

WN: Were other ranchers still driving their herd all the way down to Kailua?

SG: I think, probably, the only person that may. . . . I don't think anybody drove them. They were all trucked at that time.

WN: By that time?

SG: Yeah. We drove them down, as I say, to the road here. But they all were trucked to Kailua. Of course, the war created vehicles that ranches could use. Prior to the war, there weren't jeeps. The civilian people had nothing that was--oh, you could get FWD 20-ton plantation truck or something, but there weren't the other kind of vehicles that were developed during the war that agriculture could really use. And then, of course, as I said the other night, the jeep replaced the Kona nightingale--the donkeys. That was real good for the farmers because it didn't take up land that you had to have grass on for the donkey. (Chuckles)

WN: So, the jeep came in and the cattle trucks came in. This was all about the same time?

SG: Well, we got our first jeep in '46. The first truck we got was during the war. We got a new truck, cattle truck, in '49. That was the first new truck we had gotten. We got a pickup truck in '47. That's when we put our road in. Corps Construction gave us a contract on a road from the top of the coffee up through and to Pauahi, which is our most-used cattle facility up there. (SG refers to map.) This is Pauahi, right here. Papaloa is our uppermost cattle working facility.

WN: That's all your land?

SG: Yeah, our land goes up to a point about there, our boundary.

WN: What elevation is that?

SG: Sixty-four hundred feet. And then, above that is Bishop Estate [lands]. We lease that piece. That goes right up to the top of the mountain and is used only from about beginning of July through until, this year, we had cattle up there until January. The Bishop Estate area, probably, dries up by about October, November. Very shallow. It's all pāhoehoe with just little bits of grass here and there.

Very minimal type land.

WN: Way up there. I'd like to go up there someday.

SG: When can you go up?

WN: I'm always game.

SG: When you want to go? You want to go up now?

WN: You'll take me up?

SG: Yeah.

WN: Well, we can make arrangements. I'd like to see it.

SG: Okay. You, and Michi, and those who'd like to go?

WN: Yeah, I think so.

SG: Okay. Well, arrange it and let me know. I can't tomorrow morning. I could tomorrow afternoon. I've got someone coming in Wednesday, so I could Wednesday afternoon.

WN: Okay. Maybe I'll give you a call then.

SG: Tomorrow I'd have to be back about 5 o'clock. Then, you can see the orchids, too.

WN: Okay. Was there much competition between ranches in Kona?

SG: I don't think so. You mean, trying to outprogress the other one?

WN: That, and outsell the other?

SG: Well, outsell. . . . All of them, if they lie, they only lie to each other. My father and my Uncle Frank, I don't think they honestly believed each other. They tried to outdo each other in weights. My father was so damn good at guessing weights of cattle. After we shipped cattle down below, and he came back, and he had either his glass of gin and water or his beer, [he'd] sit down in his chair and make a list of every animal on that [shipment]. Maybe they'd be 20--(he couldn't remember that). He'd average out 20. Otherwise, he would identify each animal. Each animal's weight would be put down. He could remember cattle (as you would remember people). Only person I've ever known who was that excellent at remembering faces and everything was [Richard M.] Nixon. Nixon came down here when he first ran for vice-president. I happened to be the top, uppermost Republican on the island. I was second vice-chairman of the county committee. The chairman and the first vice-chairman were in Chicago at the convention. Nixon came down here immediately (from the convention). I did the honors

of meeting him at the airplane at Hilo, and then we went out to the police academy (for the luau). People who were introduced to him (at the airport), he called them by (name at the luau). Yeah, at lunch. I've never seen anything like it. Well, dad could do this with cows. (Laughs)

WN: That's even more talented.

SG: When those returns came back from Honolulu, he would be maybe ten pounds off the average dressed weight of the cattle. He'd call his brother, Uncle Frank, and ask him, "Well, how much do you think those cattle went the other day?" Uncle Frank would hazard a guess. Dad would either agree or say, "No, they were so much," or something.

And then, they'd be in the pen, looking at the cattle. This is during the war, because they shipped separately before that. "How old is that steer?"

"Oh, I think, maybe, he's 3, maybe 3-1/2."

You look at the damn thing. It had big horns on it. You could tell that damn steer is 4-1/2 (laughs) at least. This is why I'm saying, they weren't lying, because I'm sure each of them must have known, although they never let on to any of us that they were older than that. Maybe dad would say, "Those steers look a little older than that," or something.

That, I think, probably, was the most competition that there was. Although I've been always quite proud of our getting into soil conservation and rotation grazing (program). And we've gotten into chutes and (equipment) that others don't have. Some of them have them now, but I think we got them earlier. We had the first jeep. Personally, I credit that all to being lazy. There must be a better way of doing something. (Laughs) So, you go into a cattle chute to get away from knocking calves down. Although I like knocking calves down, but the competitiveness in branding, knocking calves down, can get into a real cruel situation, where a person on horseback will drag the calf out, get out into the open where he knows the calf is going to take off, and he just wants it to take off so that it'll hit the end of the rope, and fly up in the air, and fall down. This kind of thing (is uncalled for).

Well, the most people we ever had at a brand was after the road went in at Pauahi was 52 people. Of course, 30 of them were the first and second grade of (chuckles) Honaunau School. The others were workers and other people who had come to look. At these brands, this competitiveness would build up to where I'd say, "Wait! Everybody stop. We take a blow." Then we'd start again. You just have to break that buildup. And I'd say, "Okay. Now we'll start again. Take it easy. We'll start easy again." Of course, most of the boys were Portuguese. They have a tendency to

be competitive and a little show-offy, you might say. It's something you have to watch.

So, eventually, when other things became available, we were the first to get branding tables, squeeze chutes, and things like that, because it got away from all of that roughness. I know some of the boys (didn't) particularly care for it. My son somehow feels that I'm not too much of a rancher because I don't believe in chasing and roping. I've seen that. I've seen what's happened. Animals intentionally being allowed to break out of the herd so that somebody can chase the animal and rope it. I've seen the animal get so hot that it dies. I've seen the animal not being caught and becoming wild and hard to control. It's not worth that kind of rodeo business. If you're in the ranching business, you're in a legitimate business that requires calmness. You're working with an animal that has a tendency to be wild. You play wild with it, it's going to play wild with you.

I used to be quite proud of the fact that nobody had roped an animal on our ranch for 15 years, because it's not necessary. I wouldn't let any of our men go in the rodeo. I would not sanction any man going in the rodeo. If he wanted to, he was on his own. As my father used to say, if you rope, if you have to think about what you're going to do next, you're too slow. It has to be automatic. Our men, as a result of not roping, it was not something they could do automatically. Rodeos are fine. McCandless Ranch runs some wild cattle, and their going up to catch their wild cattle and bring them down with accidents they've had, the injuries to horses and to men, five men out for two days and they end up with five head of cattle, that's a waste of time. Two dying up on the mountain. It's just not worth it. You got to be calm. You've got to be patient. I grant you, patience is something it takes some time for all of us to acquire. I used to be probably as impatient with my father as my son is with me today at times. But after a while, you gain patience. If you are working with animals, you have to have patience. And with some kind of people. (Laughs)

WN: Were there many sanctioned rodeos around Kona?

SG: The rodeos only started about 20, 25 years ago. The first thing that I ever remember that was anything like a rodeo was a roadshow (in 1924) that came around with horses. They roped and bulldogged cattle that they bought from the ranches. The show was put on just about a quarter of a mile this side from the road that goes up to Konawaena School. That's the only rodeo I ever recall seeing, other than at the Cow Palace in San Francisco and later rodeos here down at the rodeo arena at Honaunau. And then, ranches here, the employees would go down there and rope. But I was never for our boys going down.

Well, for one thing, at the time they started, none of our employees were that young. They were all about 45 and up. We have two men

that came to work in 1941 working on the ranch now. Tsuyoki's been with us for, I guess, 20 years, practically. We've got three other men. Well, one of them is my son. The other two, a weedman who had just come a few months ago and the other guy's been with us a little over a year, but his father had been with us for about 16 years after coming from Puuwaawaa. So, all of our guys have been with us a long time. I'm sure they felt that they could do it. They always felt they could rope. I figure, if anybody's going to get hurt, they're on the job getting hurt, not rodeoing.

WN: How did you get involved in politics?

SG: I guess, first, you've got to be sort of a joiner. When I first came back, I was a member of the Lions Club. I got in because they asked me. I think they got me in so I could be the young lead in that play that you've got the negatives for in 1939. Then, the war came along. That was the end of that. I got in as director of Kona Light and Power. That got me associating with other things outside the ranch. I then became a director of Hawaii Meat Company, and that got me involved in other things. I was on the Kona Hospital Committee which then was partially political, appointed by the county. It was a county operation then. I got involved in the [Republican] party.

And then, one day, Bobby Hind and I got drunk. (Laughs) We were all arguing about government and what a lousy job was being done. During the evening as we argued, we came to the conclusion that we're sort of hypocrites. If we're going to condemn it and not going to do anything about it, then we ought to shut up. So, we both decided we'd run. We called the Republican county chairman in Hilo and told him that we'd be candidates that year.

WN: For what?

SG: I for the Board of Supervisors, and he for the House [of Representatives].

WN: In what year?

SG: That was about May of '48. We both got in. I've forgotten how long. . . . Bobby, I guess, ran up until about 1956. I ran '48, '50. I didn't run in '52. My father died in '50, and I had to get things squared away. Bobby Hind's uncle, Robson Hind, ran in my place. I went out and campaigned and did things to get him in. He got in and had a heart attack. It seemed as though he was coming along quite well and was going to run again. And then, '54, three days before filing date, Robson's wife called me. She said, "Robson cannot run." Oh my god--because we were counting on this.

I said, "Okay." So, I whipped into Hilo, and got my papers, went around and filed in time. I went in that afternoon and got in there in time to file. So, I was elected again. In '56, I learned a lesson that I never forgot. Everybody told me, "No trouble.

Guarantee. No worry." (Laughs) And as a result, I didn't campaign. In the earlier campaigns, god, I worked like hell at 'em.

And I lost. I went back on the hospital committee. I was reappointed to that. I was on the reorganization of government committee appointed by Sam King, setting up the state government--reformulating the territorial government into a state government. I was appointed to the state committee--by Quinn--on agriculture and conservation, and my dear friend and Republican fellow senator from Kona killed my appointment in the Senate--Julian Yates--which didn't endear me to him very much. (Chuckles)

WN: Why'd he do that?

SG: When Bobby and I first ran in '48, he had been on the Board of Supervisors for many years. My uncle had been on the Board of Supervisors, Frank Greenwell, for many years. He had been--in fact, both, I guess, had been in the House at one time. I don't know whether he harbored some kind of resentment towards Uncle Frank. I don't know, they always seemed to be very good friends. Bobby Hind's grandfather was senator from this side of the island for many years. When Bobby and I first ran, he was 28 and I was 29. Julian went around telling people that we were the hūpēkoles, which somehow translates out to "little kids with runny noses," which we gathered was not complimentary. (Laughs) This was not something that we brought on, so it must have been something that had been smoldering with him from before. I don't know what, really.

When the state was looking for a piece of land here for the state office building--the piece of land that it is now on right here was ours. Money had been set up by Kudo, who was then in the House, for the purchase of a piece of land he had. Well, they came up and they looked at it, and his was too steep. Helene Hale was on the board then. We were all looking at all these lots. I guess I was on the board then, too. I said to them, and Julian Yates was there, "We've got a place. We'll sell it to you at tax sales price," which is taking tax assessed value as 70 percent and taking it up to 100 percent, which would have been a state purchase price. I mean, a noncontested kind of price. They all thought and said, "That's a pretty good idea. Let's go and take a look at it." So, we all went up and looked at it. Julian, that day, thanked me. He said, "That's wonderful, being able to get that piece of land." The next day, I heard he was out chopping my neck again. (Laughs) So, there's some psychological problem. He had a block of some kind that went way back.

The reason that I was so interested in getting onto the board of agriculture and conservation was that there had never been a rancher on it. Probably, the board of agriculture was the closest thing to the ranching business that there was in state government or in territorial government. So, I really was looking forward to it.

I've got the certificate. I've got the whole works, but I never got the confirmation of the Senate. Neither did the chairman, who would be the head of the department. I can't think of his name now. Neither one of us were confirmed, both because of Julian Yates. I was then president of the Territorial Cattlemen's Council, which was a state organization. I had already been, before that, (two) years, president of the Hawaii Cattlemen's Association, which was the association on this island. I don't think by losing the election I felt as badly as I did when I didn't get this commission, because it was something I felt very strongly about. Cattle people should be represented on that.

WN: Who was represented?

SG: I don't know who eventually got it. I didn't give a damn! (Laughs)

WN: What type of people were on that commission, as far as occupation is concerned?

SG: Usually, at that time, it was made up of people involved in agriculture. It was more an agricultural type of thing than it has in recent years become. It's become more political. See, Quinn was again the beginning of another era. He had preceded himself, but prior to that, King was in [as governor]--Sam King. Sam King was very hurt because Quinn had been appointed, while (it was) felt that [Dwight D.] Eisenhower should have put King in for the second time. King, one thing that was unusual about him, he was the first person of any Hawaiian blood to have ever been appointed governor of the territory and our second to the last governor. So, he felt as though this was an important place for him.

I ran again in 1960. After my lesson of '56, I worked like hell. (Laughs) And my last election was '72 as councilman. But I won all those in between. I had 18 years on the Board of Supervisors and the council. Every time election time comes about, I get itchy feet, (chuckles) wanting to run again. I love it.

WN: Are you going to?

SG: No. If I had, I would have. Oh, this last time, I would have liked to have. It unfortunately isn't as challenging as it used to be. As a supervisor you're not only legislatively involved in the county government, but you're also administratively involved. You can work with the road overseer in your district, and that. Under the present government, the mayor has complete administrative authority. I think it worked out beautifully with [Shunichi] Kimura. Kimura was administratively capable, which [Herbert] Matayoshi isn't. And he ran a tight ship. He was responsible. There's none of this sort of stuff that happens now, "I didn't know how that happened," and "I didn't know my campaign manager did this," (chuckles) or something, appointments and they just don't make sense.

The reason for the kind of mayor we have is that while the council charter was being discussed, we built the Kohala Hospital. Up until that time, there's sort of a feeling--understanding, you might say, although it was fact. It was in fact. The chairman of the board who was elected at large from the whole island was the administrative head, and we were all more or less this county's legislature. But we knew we did have other responsibilities, as I used to go out with the road overseer and check jobs and stuff like that. We found out, as a result of the construction of Kohala Hospital, that we all had equal power. You can't run anything when you got seven people that all have equal power.

The supervisor at that time from Kohala was Ikuo Hisaoka. He got the project a \$100,000 over the cost of construction--extras that he was having done. Helene Hale was the chairman at the time. The only political appointment she made was the purchasing agent, an old-time supporter. He had supported her from the time she first started running, all the way through. He was put in as purchasing agent. Ikuo got him to buy stuff or put up purchase orders of stuff that had not been approved. When we had hearings on it, it turned out that he, unfortunately, lied to cover up Ikuo. Helene was so hurt, she fired him. The other appointments that she had made, chief engineer, deputy, all of these people were appointed on the civil service job specs, more or less. So many years of college, so many years of administrative work, all (standard qualifications). They were not picked on the basis of politics at all. The only person was this poor guy. Well, the feeling was that what our new government was going to have to be was one that the authority was put all in one person. And so we've got this tremendously strong mayor-type administration.

The job that the councilman does is damn near nothing. We used to have to go through a pile of communications like this. Now, it goes down into committees. You get three or four communications every couple weeks. Most of the communications that used to come go directly to the mayor. So, if something comes up from a constituent of yours, if he doesn't include you in a copy, you don't know even what his concern is. Because it might get to the administration and it becomes buried somehow. We went too far, but there was a reason why it happened.

That sort of tired me out. I was driving 2,000 miles a month. I'd go into Hilo on Thursday and Friday to two different meetings. I'd try to get the two chairmen to have their meetings on the same day. There seemed to be some kind of a pride in having a day for their meeting, even though as Bob Yamada said, "The meeting only lasted 45 minutes."

I said, "Bob, there's no meeting that lasts 45 minutes for me. It takes me four hours first, going and coming, plus the time."

You know, I'd come home and two hours is a long time to be by

yourself, particularly when you did this twice a week. I tried to figure out what we had accomplished that day that made it worthwhile for me to go in and spend that whole day in Hilo, and I just couldn't find that accomplishment, so I quit.

WN: So, '72 was when you quit?

SG: [Nineteen] seventy-four.

WN: Oh, '72 was your last election?

SG: Yeah.

WN: You're president of the Kona Historical Society, right? Have you always been interested in this kind of thing?

SG: Yeah. I think, probably, comes from my father. Well, my mother's been interested in early Hawaii. She's been in Daughters for Hawaii and Bishop Museum auxiliaries and things. Dad had a very strong feeling for land. I think dad felt towards Kealakekua-- not as a person feels towards land or something inhuman. My mother was his second wife. Kealakekua was (chuckles) his first wife. As he told us as kids, "If you take care of Kealakekua, Kealakekua will take care of you." Kealakekua was something you had to care for, though. It wasn't something you could neglect. You had to be cautious of it.

Amy (my sister) had a different interpretation than I. When I started saying, "We've got to sell some land," Amy didn't feel that was something we should do, that dad's interpretation was that you had to keep it and you had to do things to it to make it produce. My sister Amy involved herself in botany and helped write some pamphlets on Hawaiian plants with Otto Degener. She had also been involved with the Bishop Museum in digging up artifacts and probably was one of the best people in identifying artifacts. She had kept up her interest in Hawaiian plants and things and was considered quite an authority on that. But she hadn't had very much experience with the cost of things. (Chuckles) And so, it was difficult for me to get her to understand my thinking that Kealakekua would take care of you if you took care of it. But one of my thoughts of Kealakekua taking care of us was if there was need for money to invest in Kealakekua, you would sell something of Kealakekua towards that end. Kealakekua, we were brought up to respect and care for. With that, it would take care of us.

Hawaiians say, "love for the 'āina." Full of (bull), most of them. (Laughs) After politics, I had to quit going to some of the public meetings. I was getting too stressed by them. You know how some of these things were going. Save Our Surf people and others were screaming and yelling at each other. I'd never heard certain dirty words in public until that kind of thing (activism) happened. I just couldn't take it. So, I'd stayed away from one of the

noisiest meetings in Kona on the Ke'ei golf course. After that, I started going again because I figured all these other people had gotten scared; they just quit going. Went to one meeting, and one of the Hawaiian activists was pounding the table and saying that, "We gotta get the land back that they took away from us," and all this sort of stuff. This guy in the back, who I went to school with at Hanahaoli. Hanahaoli is considered a pretty snotty kind of school in a way. John Kelly, Save Our Surf guy, in the back, yelling, "Huli, huli!" You know, turn it over. So, when this guy quit, he said, "We gotta get it back. Take care of our land." I got up, and I apologized that I'd only been here for 123 years. But I invited them all if they'd like to go and see how we took care of the land. And nobody said a goddamn word. (Chuckles)

But anyway, I think our love of things old and that probably comes from feeling of the land first. For Kealakekua in particular. Dad used to identify stuff. I wish, after he had died, that I would have listened to him more. I think we all have a tendency to turn off our thinking devices when we hear something which we consider our parents are chewing over again. So, it comes at you. I wish now that I had listened to it, because those are the things that now I'm trying to find. Associations between people, things that have happened somewhere, what happened as a result of it, or why did it happen. This is what he used to tell us about all the time. Now, I'm trying to find it. But I think, somewhere along the line, the interest in the old things has developed. My mother collected old books and I collect old books now, and I concentrate on Hawaii.

Coming back from Hilo one day, going past the old store, they were tearing down my grandfather's old home. "My god! What the hell's happened?" Well, my cousins are kind of short on sensitivity. (Chuckles) They tore down the old house, and he took some of these big hand-hewn timbers up to the mountain and made gateposts out of them. Soon as I saw this, I went and hired a commercial photographer. I guess, maybe, this is when I was really starting to exert myself in history. I had him go and take pictures of the construction detail of the home. No nails. It all fitted in together.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

SG: People become more conscious of this sort of stuff. There were three associations or [historical] societies on this side of the island started at the same time--Ka'u, Kona, and Kohala. Kohala one got involved in personalities and got screwed up. The only thing, it seems, that really keeps the Ka'u one going is that [C.] Brewer has to have sort of a local historical society to help do archeological studies. But as a society that's active, I think we're the only one, really. And where we started with about 25

people, I think we've got about 120 paid members right now. I think since we got the building fixed and we're able to have better programs and (shows), we'll come along a little better. We're doing all right now. Got a lot of good people working for me (laughs) or with me.

WN: Before I turn off the tape, do you have anything more to say about Kona or your life in Kona?

SG: Yeah, I think so. The past was wonderful. The reminiscences of the past, things I remember. The winding roads and the very friendly people. These things, unfortunately, can't go on forever. But there's nothing wrong with now, and I don't think there'll be anything wrong with the future. Life is an enthusiastic thing. I love it. We should all get involved and do things. We can't have more people, and have things stay the same. And more people doesn't mean new people coming in. It's just a natural thing to happen. So, it's nice to reminisce about something and remember the exciting times of (the past), but there'll still be exciting times. Never give up. (Laughs) It's a wonderful life.

WN: Thank you, Mr. Greenwell, for three really interesting interviews.

END OF INTERVIEW

A SOCIAL HISTORY OF KONA

Volume I

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